

The Beaver

WINTER 1973





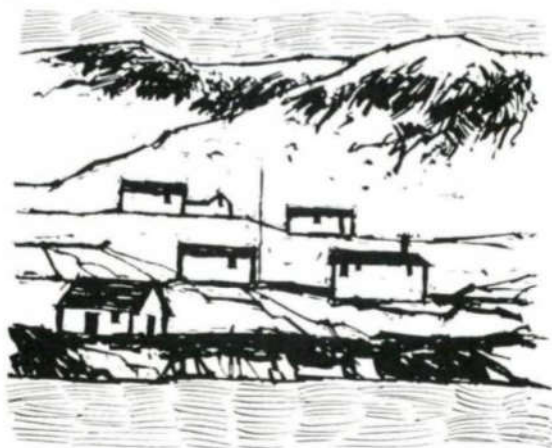
from sea to sea...



across the span



of three centuries



OURS IS A TRADITION OF SERVICE TO CANADIANS

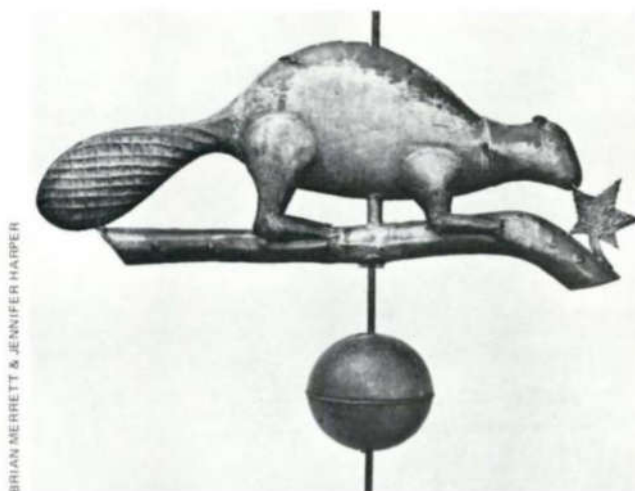
Hudson's Bay Company

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: Helen Burgess



BRIAN MERRETT & JENNIFER HARPER

'Beaver Weathervane' by an anonymous Canadian artist. This late 19th century weathervane is from the exhibition 'People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada', prepared by Russell Harper for the National Gallery of Canada. The exhibition is in Ottawa to 6 January 1974, then travels on to Toronto and Vancouver.

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COVER: 'Man in Barn' by Allen Sapp

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The Cree Artist ALLEN SAPP

BY JOHN ANSON WARNER

Professor Warner is with the Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan. The paintings by Allen Sapp bear his direct and simple titles.

'Chasing a coyote'



The Beaver / 4

IN THE PARKLANDS of Northwest Saskatchewan are the historic communities of Battleford and North Battleford, in whose area are located ten Indian reserves — home for about thirty-eight hundred treaty Indians. One of these reserves, Red Pheasant, is the home of Allen Sapp, the Cree artist.

Mr Sapp, born in 1928, has lived all his life in the Parklands. The haunting melancholy of his winter scenes and his evocative interpretation of his fellow Plains Cree people mark him as a rare artist. His paintings are a near-definitive statement about his people and their lives some twenty and thirty years ago.

When Allen was a child his mother died of tuberculosis and the young boy was taken by his grandmother, Mrs Maggie Soonias, and raised by her on the reserve. He came to love and revere his grandmother; she appears and reappears in his work. In his early years he was stricken with spinal meningitis and spent several months in the Indian hospital at North Battleford. After his hospitalization, he spent further months recuperating in his grandmother's log cabin.

At the Onion Lake Residential School, he was an indifferent pupil who preferred to draw rather than work on academic subjects. His sketches were, at first, a means of expression for the shy and delicate boy.

After his marriage in 1955 to Margaret Paskimin Whiteford of the neighbouring Sweetgrass Reserve, Mr Sapp thought it desirable to move to North Battleford in order to better provide for himself and his wife. Although he was added to the welfare rolls, he finally did locate part-time employment at a local hobby shop where the owner, Mrs Eileen Barryman, gave him his first systematic lessons in painting. She also helped him to sell some of his first efforts, albeit for trifling sums.

On the strength of these sales, he received a grant for art supplies



'Blowing snow'

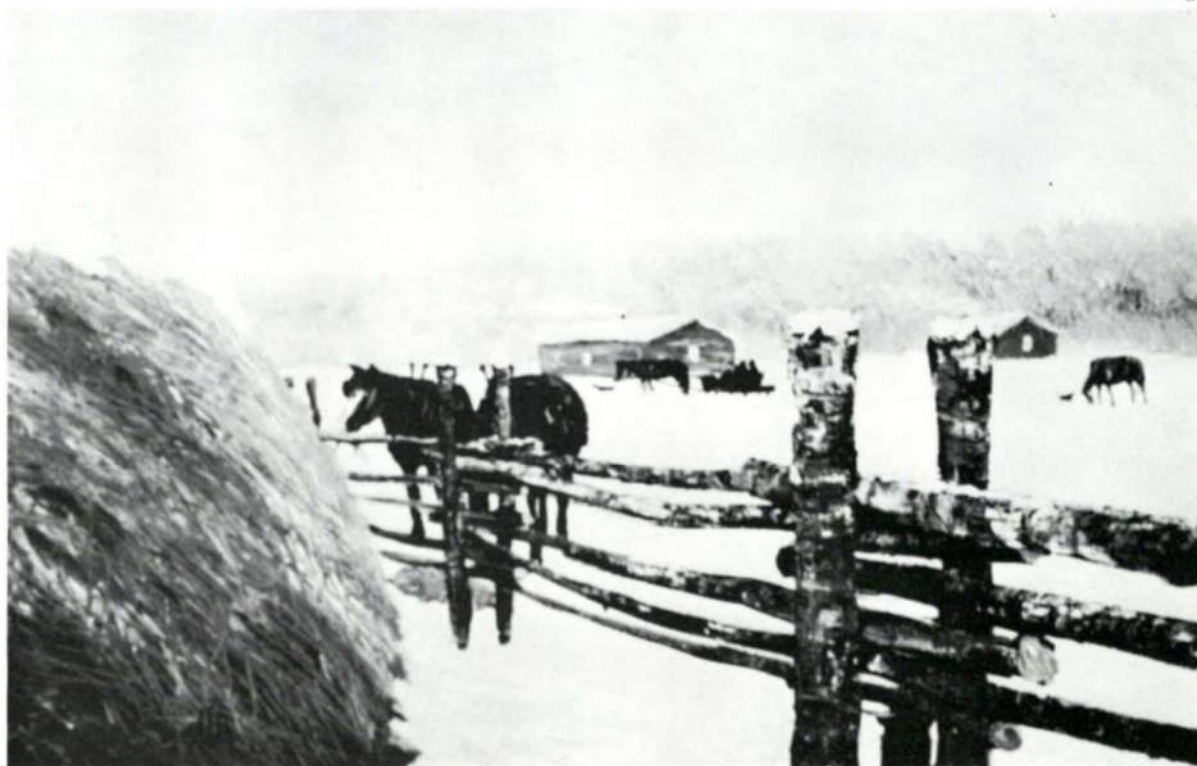
'Nobody home'





The artist with his wife Margaret.

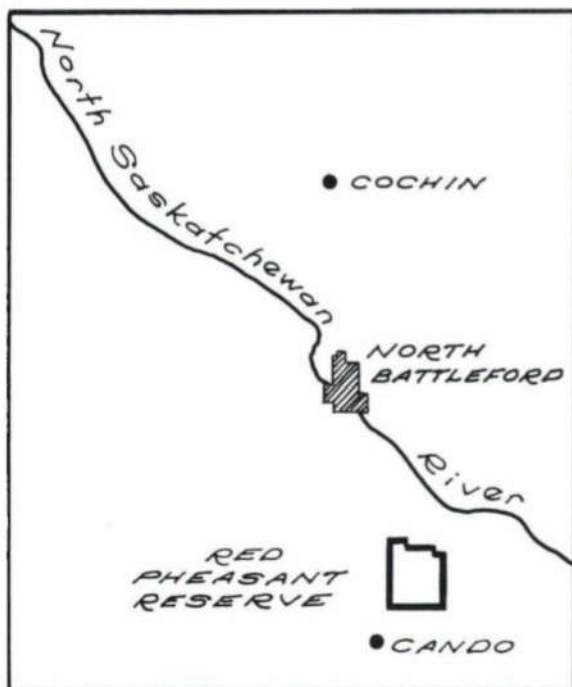
'Horses eating'



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'Drawing my grandmother'



from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. He returned to the Red Pheasant Reserve to paint.

In 1966 a North Battleford physician, Dr Allan B. Gonor, met the young artist on the street in North Battleford. He had his coat collar turned up and was peddling his work from a parcel under his arm.

Dr Gonor looked at the canvases and bought his first Sapp, an oil entitled 'Chief Swimmer'. The following summer, he saw a second painting that greatly excited his interest in the work of the sincere young Cree. It was a farm scene on the Red Pheasant reserve; its price was \$35.00. Dr Gonor bought the painting and asked the artist if he could do more scenes from his memories of life on the reserve. Sapp agreed to do these and accepted a cash advance for paint, brushes, and canvases. He produced several paintings that Dr Gonor liked and bought. At this point, Mr Sapp became concerned about his income from painting.

'He was afraid to continue' Dr Gonor recalled 'as apparently, he was not allowed to earn much money and accept welfare.' The doctor then suggested a partnership. The artist would paint full time, and until the partner-



'Going to have a drink'

ship was making money, he could draw advances against future sales for the needs of his family.

'He was hesitant at first' wrote Dr Gonor in a report to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 'but after discussing the arrangement with a social worker, he took the gamble.'

As partner in the new agreement, Dr Gonor undertook to market the artist's work. He took several canvases to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and to a Montreal department store. The work was greeted with enthusiasm and found ready buyers.

Encouraged by these successes, Dr Gonor arranged for Artist Winona Mulcaster of the University of Saskatchewan to work with Sapp to develop his skills further. Winona Mulcaster is a devotee of the more contemporary modes of abstract painting but she was careful not to alter Sapp's essential approach. Her advice was confined to suggestions on composition and organizational matters. She was enthusiastic about Allen Sapp, and wrote that 'his paintings in oil and acrylic tell of life as seen by a sensitive man, keenly aware of his surroundings... they record the way it is... always with restraint, with freshness, and complete honesty. They are marked by a very personal kind of realism that is the

result of his total involvement with everything he paints, the people, the landscape, the animals... he knows and loves them.'

The Sapp paintings are clearly scenes recalled from his prodigious memory and his handling of the subject is always realistic. Yet he goes beyond realism to provide the viewer with a mood and feeling.

'The landscapes create a subtle atmosphere, the people are quietly eloquent' stated Thecla Zeeth in a brochure published by the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon in 1969. 'Restraint and discipline are so apparent as to indicate and suggest, not merely illustrate. The pictures live and breathe.'

The subjects that have Sapp's attention are the simple, everyday things of Indian life as they were when he was growing up on the reserve in the 1930s and 1940s: going to get water in winter, feeding chickens, forking hay in the barn, rounding up stray horses. His affection is for what is real rather than what is ideal.

Allen Sapp is gaining wide recognition through his paintings. He has had successful showings in Canada and the United States and two extremely well-received exhibitions at the Alwyn Galleries in London. ♦

Was There An Unsuspected Killer Aboard 'The Unicorn'?

BY DELBERT YOUNG

Sixteenth and seventeenth century ships and seamanship are of particular interest to Mr Young who has written five books, numerous articles and radio scripts, mainly on these subjects.

EXCEPT FOR THE LAST FEW to die, all sixty-one of the men lie in unmarked graves some four miles to the southward, and across the estuary from the present-day town of Churchill, Manitoba. They were placed in their shallow graves 354 years ago; the men who buried them in the frozen earth were themselves weak and ill. These facts are part of history. However, when the cause — or causes — of their deaths is closely examined, one senses a mystery.

The men were members of the Danish Expedition of 1619-20 that had been sent out to search for the Northwest Passage. Information on the expedition is contained in Jens Munck's *Relation* or account of the voyage which states, 'I, Jens Munck, in the name of God, sailed with the said two ships, from Copenhagen into the Sound, on the 9th of May [1619]; and there were then on the ship, *Enhiörningen* [Unicorn] forty-eight, and, on the sloop *Lamprenen* [Lamprey], sixteen persons.' During the following one hundred and twenty-one days Captain Munck described a series of tragic events.

On the 18 May, a seaman committed suicide by leaping overboard into a rough sea. The other seamen regarded this as an ill omen. Then on the 25th they suffered a second misfortune; *Lamprey* sprang such a serious leak they were forced to put into Karlsund, Norway, to repair it. While they were about the repair job, one of the two coopers died and Captain Munck 'caused three young men to be engaged at Skudenes . . . so as to maintain my full complement of men.'

Leaving Karlsund on 30 May, the ships sailed west in search of the Northwest Passage. After fighting ice for week after week in Hudson Strait 'in great danger of our lives' and going ashore on one occasion at Haresund, on the north side of Hudson Strait to bury another of his men, Munck finally entered Hudson Bay. Crossing it in a southwesterly direction, he entered the estuary of the Churchill River on 7 September. At the time, he had but one ship, the *Unicorn*; the *Lamprey* 'during the great gale and storm, had strayed', but joined the *Unicorn* two days later, after searching for an 'open passage' to the north.

To the weary Danes and Norwegians, the Churchill area must have appeared to be a land which, while not flowing with milk and honey, was endowed with acceptable substitutes. Wild fruits in the form of berries were plentiful; there was wood for fires and flocks of ptarmigan and partridge. Each day, with the tide, beluga whales

came into the estuary. Munck recorded that he caught one and had it dragged up onto the shore where, upon the following day, he shot a large white bear which had come down to the water near the ship to feed upon the whale. The bear meat was relished by the men; the Captain had ordered the cook 'just to boil it slightly, and then to keep it in vinegar for a night'. The meat intended for use at his own table was roasted and Munck stated 'it was of good taste and did not disagree with us.'

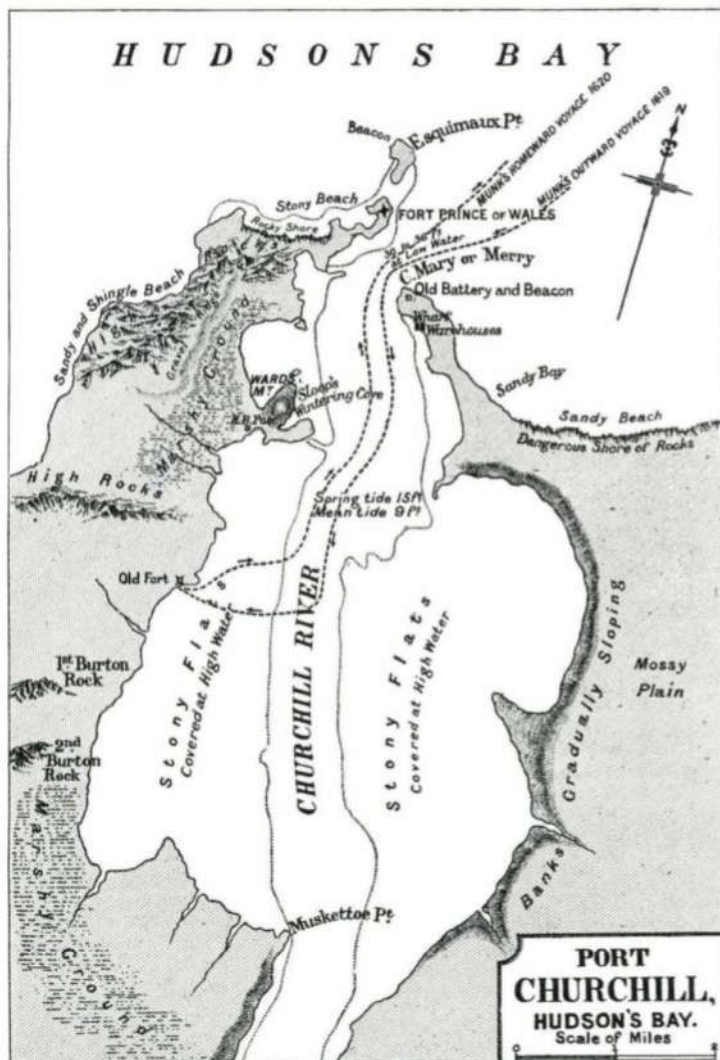
Upon their arrival at Churchill, several of the men were ailing. We know this for Munck had 'a good fire made on shore every day for the sick, whereby they were comforted, and in time nicely regained their health.' It is probable that they had a touch of the scurvy, and responded quickly to the fresh food.

Since the winter was closing in, with 'nothing but frost and snow' and the area had an abundance of game and wood, the estuary appealed to Munck as a winter haven. The single drawback was the anchorage by the rock. The ships were exposed to westerly gales and in the spring there would be the added danger of 'drift ice'. On 19 September he sailed up the river, and found a site about one Danish mile — the equivalent to four and one-half English ones — south of the rock on the opposite side of the estuary. There, the rugged shoreline

The Churchill River, about four miles downstream from Munck's winter harbour.



P. FALSSON, H.B.C.



The Churchill River, showing the 'Sloop's Wintering Cove'.
From 'Danish Arctic Expeditions 1605 to 1620'.

and high promontory afforded protection from both westerly and northerly gales.

He anchored his ships for the night in the channel of the Churchill directly opposite the cove. Next morning, cautiously he began to work his ships across the stone-strewn flat, a distance of nine hundred fathoms, in order to get them close under the shore. Due to the flow of the tides the task took eight days. In the end, the preparations for winter were 'well finished and the ship and sloop well protected against ice and tempest'. The ships were close to shore with their keels resting in trenches, and fortified by timber and stones to protect them against the ice.

Munck immediately set everyone to work. Some men hunted; some gathered wood; others were set to making charcoal. The remainder were busying themselves building stone fireplaces upon the decks of the larger of the two ships, the *Unicorn*. To take advantage of those fireplaces, and to make simpler the preparation of meals, the crew of the *Lamprey* went to live on the *Unicorn*. It was fortunate that Munck acted with dispatch. During the

last half of October winter came savagely upon them and some days were so bitterly cold that no one stirred out of the ship.

It is difficult to estimate the number of Munck's men who had fallen seriously ill prior to Christmas. Munck's *Relation* was not kept with care. On 10 November he wrote that 'the whole crew were well satisfied, even merry and joyful' and on 21 November he commented that 'a sailor who had long been ill was buried.' However, the *Relation* reveals that well before Christmas there were health problems. A second man, David Velske, the surgeon of the *Lamprey*, died 12 December and was buried two days later. Others were certainly on their pallets for the last time. In at least three instances, when writing of deaths which took place shortly after the beginning of the new year, Munck says the men who died had long been in poor health.

What was causing his men, so early in the winter, to die? On 10 January Munck wrote 'The illness which then raged was very peculiar, and the sick were generally attacked by dysentery about three weeks before they died.' On the same day Munck recorded the death of his head cook, and the information that the chaplain and the remaining surgeon had taken to their beds 'having for some time felt very unwell'. From then on 'violent sickness . . . prevailed more and more.'

Munck, in his *Relation*, was definitely of the opinion that it was something other than the scurvy that was killing his men. Months later he used the word so dreaded by seventeenth-century seamen, but when he did so, it was in conjunction with what he described as the terrible state of their mouths, a symptom of the scurvy. C. C. A. Gosch, editor of *Danish Arctic Expeditions 1605 to 1620* published by the Hakluyt Society in 1897 negated Munck's opinion that the disease was 'a rare and extraordinary one' with his own bland observation that while Munck undoubtedly was acquainted with scurvy, he had never encountered it in 'so acute a form'. Gosch then remarked that 'the want of fur clothing which confined the men to close quarters on board' probably contributed greatly to their deaths. His lack-of-exercise theory is as questionable as his opinion that Munck was not an expert on scurvy. Munck had spent twenty-eight years at sea. The odds were that he had seen many seamen die from that disease. Lastly, Gosch placed part of the blame for the deaths on Munck himself. He recorded that Munck had allowed his men beer and wine not seeming to be aware 'of the disastrous influence of alcohol on patients or persons beginning to ail from it [scurvy]'. He remarked also that the Scandinavians of the seventeenth century were 'hard drinkers'; he could, and with equal truth have said the same of the English. During that period the daily ration of beer to English seamen was 160 ounces, in addition to varying amounts of wine and whisky. While discussing intemperance aboard the *Unicorn*, Gosch ignored the notation by Munck on the same subject. On Christmas eve, Munck



The men prepare for winter, gathering wood for the fireplaces and for 'bridge piles' of log and stone to protect the ships.

wrote 'I gave the men wine and strong beer, which they had to boil afresh, for it was frozen to the bottom.' The boiling would have reduced significantly the alcoholic content of the wine and beer.

However, the most important bit of evidence that Munck's men, in early winter, may well have been suffering from some ailment other than, or even in conjunction with, the scurvy was the fact that he had with him two experienced Arctic pilots: William Gordon and John Watson. Watson, a decade previous, or so it was believed, had survived a winter in the Bay with the Button expedition. He, in particular, would have known how to deal with the scurvy. Sir Thomas Button had two of Hudson's men with him: Robert Bylot and Abacuk Prickett. Hudson's men had cured themselves of scurvy by boiling the needles and gum of evergreens and drinking the broth. The simple truth is that the treatment of scurvy had become common knowledge in both England and France.

By the time that spring arrived however, those of Munck's men who were still alive most certainly had the scurvy. If, as seems likely, they had taken the standard remedy for it, they had either lost faith in it or had become too weak and ill to go ashore to gather the

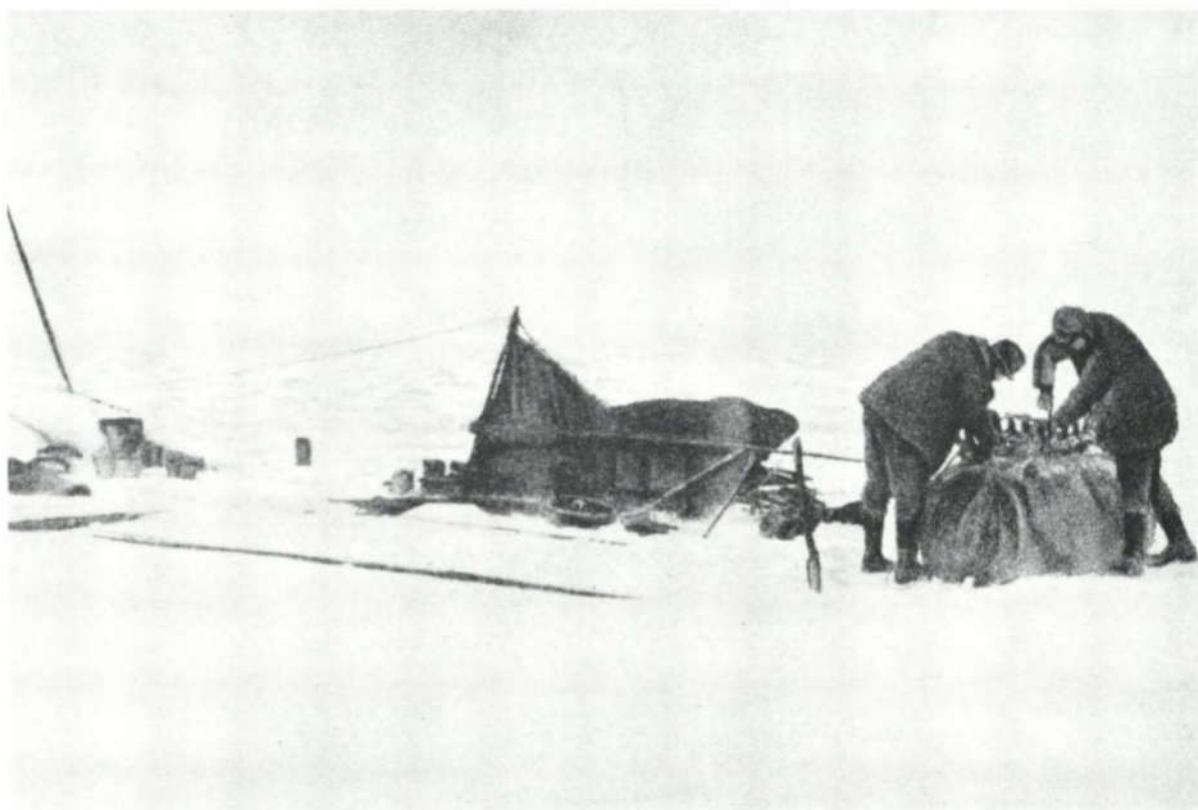
life-saving needles and gum. In his *Relation* Munck said there were days when he was the only one who could hobble about. Dead men 'on account of our extreme weakness' were dragged to their burial 'on a little sledge which has been used in the winter for the transport of wood.' By the first week in June only four men remained alive: Munck, the sailmaker, and two men who had gone ashore to live. On 8 June, Munck came out of his cabin to sleep on deck and the following day the men on shore saw him and came out on the ice to the ship to help him come ashore. For some time the three 'dwelled on shore under a bush', and had a fire during the day. 'Later on we crawled about everywhere near, wherever we saw the least green growing out of the ground, which we dug up and sucked the main root thereof.' Gradually those on shore regained their health and strength; the sailmaker, still on board ship, died. Then, in what must be regarded as an epic of the sea, the three Danes cleared their ship of the dead and sailed the *Lamprey* home. They left behind them their larger ship, the *Unicorn*. They also left behind the mysterious illness that had killed many, if not all, of their comrades.

Possibly the crew died, as historians have claimed, from cold, privations, and the scurvy. This too-simple explanation is difficult to accept. It brings to mind



ANDRÉE, SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR ANTHROPOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY.

Fraenkel and Strindberg with one of the bears they shot for food. Below is a camp of the Andrée expedition as they move south over the ice towards White Island. These photographs, taken by Andrée and Strindberg, were on the exposed film found thirty-three years later with the remains of the expedition.



STRINDBERG, SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR ANTHROPOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY.

another theory on mass deaths in the same area that is equally puzzling. This is the theory that the Eskimo population north of Churchill was decimated by a disease brought to them by the Button expedition of 1612-13. A 'longe Boate' it has been suggested, broke loose from the *Discovery* during a storm, drifted ashore, and brought with it some kind of infection that had come out with the ship from England.

Button's men had not been in contact with other humans for more than a year. Any disease such as typhus, bubonic plague, or smallpox would have run its course. There was evidence to suggest that Button's crew had been stricken by some ailment — one they had contracted during the winter that they spent at the mouth of the Nelson River. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the expedition is incomplete. No narrative of the voyage exists. However, Luke Foxe who came upon the Eskimo burial ground on the island of Sir Thomas Rowe's Welcome in 1631, made it his business to talk with Abacuk Prickett, a survivor of the Button expedition. Prickett described the winter briefly by saying that game had been plentiful, with 1,800 dozens of partridges being taken, along with other game birds. The ships were banked 'with Piles of Firre and earth' to keep them warm and three fires were kept going at all times. He also admits, without giving the exact number, that many men died.

The historian, Thomas Rundall, who wrote *Narrative of Voyages towards the Northwest in Search of a Passage to Cathay and India 1496-1631*, published in 1849, attributed the sickness and deaths of the Button expedition to very severe weather after 16 February; at one time, he stated, no more than eight men were able to get about. Neither Prickett nor Rundall blamed the scurvy. Nor did a man named Hawkrige who was on the voyage and was also questioned by Foxe. Hawkrige gave the impression that the winter was a mild one. Prior to mid-February, he said, there were 'divers warme thawing days'. He, like Prickett, says the hunting was excellent and that many bears and wolves came to them from over the ice. Like Prickett, Hawkrige admitted that many men died. In fact, so many died that Button abandoned his larger ship, the *Resolution*, and returned to England in Hudson's old ship, the *Discovery*.

Again, why should so many men have died? The hunting was good, the fuel plentiful and the winter mild. Nor was the winter a long one. The ice cleared from the river on 21 April and after that Button and his men had an abundance of fish 'as big as Mackrills' to supplement their diet.

A link to these two disasters may be found in the story of a third, and more recent Arctic expedition. In 1897 the Swedish airman, Salomon Andrée and two companions, Knut Fraenkel and Nils Strindberg, attempted to drift over the North Pole in an enormous balloon. Called the *Eagle*, it took off from Dane Island, a dot of land lying off the northwest coast of Spitsbergen,

at 2:30 pm, 11 July. It was visible to its ground crew for upwards of an hour as it decreased in size with distance. Then it vanished.

Thirty-three years later, in 1930, a combined scientific and commercial expedition aboard the Norwegian vessel *Bratvaag*, visited the Spitsbergen Islands on the way to the Franz Josef Islands. On 5 August, men from the *Bratvaag* landed on White Island which is northeasterly in the Spitsbergen group, made geological and scientific observations and returned to their ship. The next day, a herd of walrus appeared; the men pursued them, killed some and proceeded to cut them up. Two of the men, searching for a drink on the island, found the lid of an aluminum pot near a stream and farther inland, a canvas boat. The two young crew members who made the discovery called to the walrus hunters, and a further search revealed the bodies of three men. From the remains of the expedition, diaries which had been kept by Andrée and Strindberg, as well as a camera with exposed film, were recovered in good condition. According to the diaries, the *Eagle* had remained aloft for 65 hours and 33 minutes, during which time she travelled about 517 miles. Then due to icing conditions on the fabric of the balloon she made a rough but final landing on the ice about 192 miles north of Northeast Land. The three Swedes were not completely disheartened. They were supplied with concentrated foods, a canvas boat, sleds, clothing, sleeping bags, a silk tent, and a primus stove. They sorted out the items they needed for survival, then headed south over the floe ice, travelling with three sleds and the boat. Along the way, whenever the occasion arose, they shot white bears for their meat. At first they fried the bear meat; then on 21 August Andrée wrote: 'Raw meat with salt tastes like oysters and we hardly wanted to fry it . . . the bear's meat was easily eaten raw.' They lived on and travelled across drifting ice until, on 17 September, they sighted White Island, the first land they had seen in 68 days. From White Island it was fifty miles to Northeast Land and safety in the native settlements they knew were there. To celebrate they cooked a special meal and drank a bottle of wine.

Although the men could now move ashore from the ice floe they showed no immediate inclination to do so. Hunting was good from the floe and they were living in a 'permanent' house of ice blocks and animal skins. On 2 October the floe broke into several pieces. The men gathered their belongings and on 5 October began to move ashore. Soon after the move the diary entries ceased. On Thursday, 7 October, Strindberg wrote: 'Moved'. The last entry by Andrée was made the following day; he wrote that they had secured driftwood 'so that we could lay the beams for the roof of our house.'

It was known that Strindberg died first, for his body was buried in a cleft of rock and covered with a layer of stones. It was thought that Andrée and Fraenkel died

within a few days, for the camp site showed no signs of being long occupied.

A number of theories were advanced on the cause of the deaths. Some believed the men had frozen to death and supported their arguments with detailed comments on their items of clothing. The theory which gained gradual, but general acceptance was that the two survivors had died of carbon monoxide asphyxia in the tiny closed tent, the gas having come from their primus stove. This theory was not questioned, except in private by Dr E. A. Tryde of Denmark. Dr Tryde had read copies of the diaries, noting with professional interest those entries which told of the men experiencing a burning sensation in their eyes; having running noses, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, and a constant feeling of fatigue.

Dr Tryde was a busy man and could not investigate the matter more fully at the time of the discovery. Later, the war intervened and it was 1949 before he actually solved the mystery of the deaths. In November 1949 he visited Sweden and took the train south from Stockholm to Granna, the birthplace of Andrée. Granna boasted a small museum which contained the relics of the expedition. On his first trip there, Tryde accomplished little. However, after a second trip, in January

1950, he left for Denmark with 14 minute — together they weighed but three grams — bits of dried bear meat he had scraped from the bones of a bear the men had shot.

He submitted the samples to a laboratory in Copenhagen for thorough examination. The results were reported to him on 20 April 1950. They confirmed what Dr Tryde had long believed; that Andrée and Fraenkel, and probably Strindberg as well, had died from eating improperly cooked bear meat. In the fourteen microscopic samples of dried meat, twelve trichina capsules had been found and positively identified.

Trichinosis is a parasitical disease which, though this was not known until recent years, is next to being endemic in bears. A survey of bears shot during the course of a single year in Greenland revealed that 30 per cent were affected. In recent years hunters in Quebec shot a black bear and ate some of the meat; all were stricken. At one time it was believed that only men, rats, and swine could harbour the deadly capsules. The list now includes bears and walrus. The course of trichinosis is as follows: immediately the infected meat is eaten, embryo larvae are liberated into the stomach of the victim. In three days these tiny parasites have grown to

Caribou were taken along Hudson Strait early in the voyage, as shown in this woodcut from 'Danish Arctic Expeditions 1605-1620'.





Polar bear on the ice in Hudson Bay.

adult size, with most of them being, by then, embedded deeply in the intestinal mucous membranes. There they reproduce in great numbers. The young parasites burrow into the tissues and are carried to all parts of the victim's body via the circulatory system. This process continues for about six weeks, during which time the migrating larvae have encysted themselves in muscle tissue throughout the body. There they may remain for years.

Initially the symptoms of trichinosis are often mistaken for those of typhoid or paratyphoid. This was the case in 1947 when Eskimos in a part of Greenland became ill. Another of its disguises is rheumatism on account of the severe muscular pains it can cause. Diarrhoea and stomach pains occur within a week and continue for as long as six, after which the production of embryos ceases, unless the host is reinfected by eating still more capsule-bearing meat, improperly cooked.

'The illness which then raged was very peculiar, and the sick were generally attacked by dysentery about three weeks before they died,' wrote Munck. Later he mentioned that he and his men bathed in a wine-cask 'as many of them as could move about... which bath (thanks be to God) did us much good'. Here Munck described the only treatment which would ease the discomfort of muscular pains resulting from trichinosis.

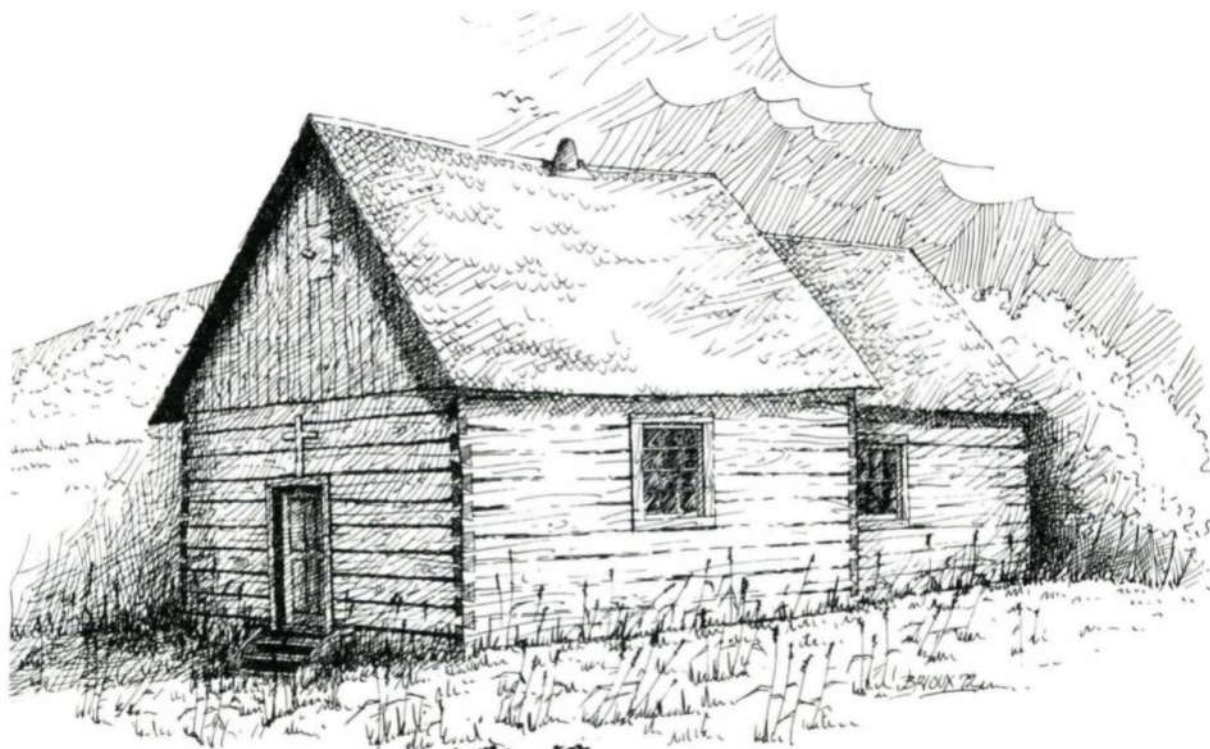
In the case of the Andr  e expedition, the diaries told of the men eating bear meat over a period of several weeks. The first of these bears may, or may not, have been carriers. However, it was known they ate their first bear meat on or about 20 July. Within a week, the diaries mention the first of the symptoms of trichinosis: the men were experiencing great weariness. From

then on, entries mention the other symptoms one by one.

From the records it is established that members of both expeditions had been eating bear meat, at times poorly cooked or raw. It is uncertain how much bear meat Munck's men ate. Munck mentions their killing and eating a white bear only once but his records were casually kept and it could well be that more were taken. On 21 May, he and three of his men 'went on shore where we made a fire, and anointed our joints with bear's grease.' Was the grease from the bear shot on 12 September or from others shot later? There is no answer to this question. Bears, however, were and still are, plentiful in the Churchill area, and they were the largest game animal to be had. Caribou were taken early in the voyage along Hudson Strait, but there is no reference to their being taken on the Churchill River.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the people of Northern Europe looked upon bear meat as a gourmet item. Most, if not all, of the expeditions sent out in search of the Northwest Passage killed and ate bears. Frobisher's men ate bears; Davis's men did too. Does it not seem likely that Button's men killed and ate some of the 'divers Beares' that came to them across the ice? And did that bear meat infect and kill so many of his men that he had to abandon his larger ship, the *Resolution*?

After a lapse of 350 years, it would be difficult to confirm that Munck's men died from trichinosis. But is there not some suspicion that, at the very least, the first men to die may have met their deaths from eating the bear meat, which, in Munck's own words, he ordered his cooks to 'boil it slightly, and then keep it in vinegar for a night'?



~ Holy Cross ~
 blessed by Fr. J. M. J. Lejacq, o.m.i. on Sept. 14, 1871
 Pinchi, B.C.

Temples in the Wilderness

Text and sketches by John J. Brioux

A SMALL, SOMEWHAT CRUDE, and run-down church in the wilderness may not hold the interest of the observer for long. Yet when the long years of a people struggling to fullness with their missionary are considered, that church takes on a new dimension. It becomes a temple in the wilderness.

Located on the shores of Stuart Lake in the northern interior of British Columbia are three such temples. This district is the heart of the Carrier (Takulli) country, a tribe of the Great Déné or Athabaskan race. It was for these people and their God that the temples were erected.

The first apostle to behold this beautiful lake was Father De Smet who arrived 16 September 1842 and established the first Catholic mission on its southern

shore. Father Nobili, replaced Father De Smet in June 1845, but after two years, returned to Vancouver.

'For fully twenty-one years no representative of any church was to continue the work of the two pioneers' wrote Father A. G. Morice in his *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*. 'With the exception of the accidental visit of Brother Antoine, a sort of lay reader who passed some time at Stuart Lake in the early sixties, nothing could be done for the northern missionary field until 1861'.

In 1868 Bishop L. J. D'Herbomez and Father M. McGuckin again brought the church to Stuart Lake. These good Fathers left and were replaced the following year by Father Jean-Marie Le Jacq.

It was Father Le Jacq and the Indian people who erected the first temples of worship in those early years. The structures were built hurriedly and crudely and have long since fallen into decay or been dismantled. Such a church would have been St Paul's at Nakez-le (Necoslief) which was built in 1869, probably by Father Le Jacq on his first visit through the district. Father Morice quoted

Father Brioux of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate has done considerable historical research on the pioneer Oblates in British Columbia, and has sketched many of their small early churches in the Interior.

a reference to this church from the H B C journals of Fort St. James:

Good Friday, April 15th, 1870 — A collection of Indians from all quarters to hold out mass till Easter Sunday. Singing and praying is now quite the order of the day in the church.

The oldest church still standing is Holy Cross on Pinchi Reserve, at the mouth of Pinchi Creek and Stuart Lake. Holy Cross was built by Father Le Jacq and the Indian people in 1871 and blessed on September 14. Among the Indian people who helped in supervising the construction of the church were Chief Dominique and Moise John; they used a team of horses, skids, and rollers to handle the timbers. The church remained on its original location until the 1930s when, due to the flooding of Pinchi Creek, it was moved back a short distance to the spot where it now stands.

Holy Cross was in use until the early 1960s when concern for the heavy strain of snow on the old rafters caused it to be abandoned. It is deteriorating rapidly and stands gaunt and forlorn on the grassy flats of old Pinchi. The bell hangs silent to the left of the door against time-greyed timber. The only feature that marks Holy Cross as a church is the simple cross over the door. Built of hand-hewn square logs, expertly dove-tailed into place by the Indians, the church is still sturdy despite the ravages of time. The interior, though riddled by the bullets of vandals several years ago, remains quaint and

attractive. The monotonous chirping of swallows and the rustling of bats in the walls have long replaced the prayerful chant of human voices.

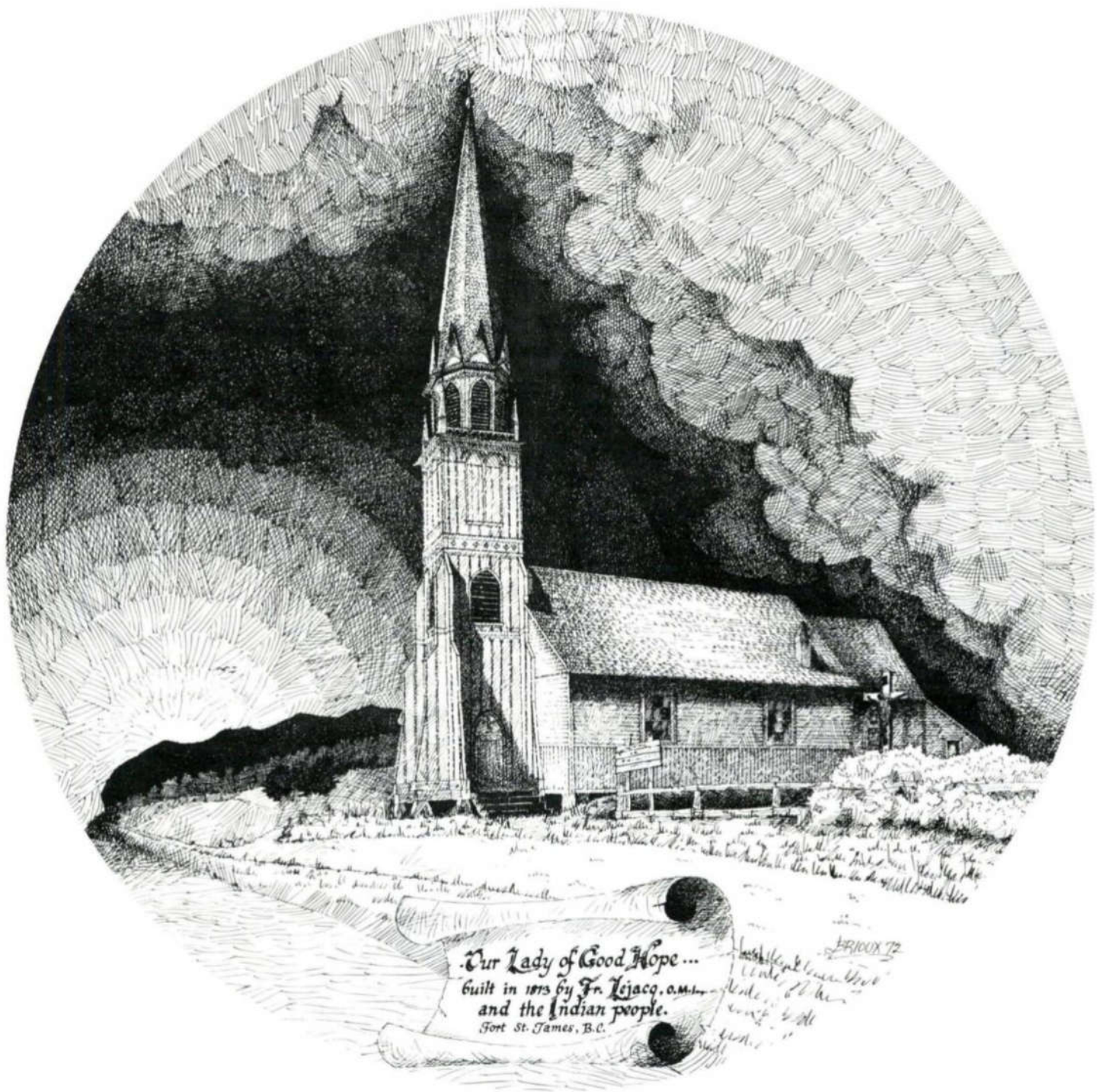
An elderly Indian of the Pinchi Reserve recalled that one year during the potlatch season between Christmas and New-year's day, Father Nicholas Coccola administered the sacrament of matrimony with six couples during one celebration. This certainly would have been a memorable occasion for Holy Cross and the small population of Pinchi.

About twenty-five miles up the lake at the headwaters of the Tachie River and Stuart Lake is the second oldest temple in the wilderness. Perched up high on the banks of the old village of Tachie, St. Cecelia's, weathered and worn, looks out over the lake. This church was built by Father Le Jacq and the Indian people in 1872, and was blessed on August 23.

According to Justa Hanson of Tachie, St. Cecelia's was first constructed of logs on a location to the right of the present-day graveyard. In 1913, probably due to a depression in the terrain and heavy flood waters, it was numbered, dismantled, and re-erected to the left of the graveyard where it stands now. Over the years it was covered with wood siding and painted white with red trim. Justa also recalls the day that the bell, having travelled from France by steamship and into Tachie by dug-out canoe, assumed its place in the modest belfry.



- St. Cecilia's -
blessed by Fr. J.M. Lejacq on Aug 23, 1872, Tachie, B.C.



Our Lady of Good Hope ...
built in 1873 by Fr. Lejacq. O.M.I.
and the Indian people.
Fort St. James, B.C.

To this day it peals in the silent wilderness calling the villagers to prayer.

On earlier Christmas eves, the celebration of midnight mass would draw the Indian people by dog-team from Portage, Grande Rapids, and Trembleur Lake. There was not a wood stove in St. Cecelia's in the early days; a huge clay fireplace shed its warmth on those gathered around its cheerful flames. During the celebration the congregation would be divided into four voice groups ranging from soprano to bass. These groups would alternate while singing old Indian hymns and carols. This fine singing is still heard today at liturgical gatherings where a number of older persons are assembled.

Midnight mass would be followed by a potlatch which would last up to two weeks. The festivities took place in a 'big house' where gifts would sometimes be piled to the rafters. One could tell by the armorial colours tied to the church door who was providing the potlatch and where it was being held. At such festivities the Carriers would dance and sing far into the night, displaying the dances, songs, blankets, drums, and rattles of their respective clans. The potlatch included plenty to eat for everyone. Each family would bring their choicest dishes to be shared by all: bear ribs, beaver tails, dried salmon and berries. Some families might slaughter a cow or bring home-grown vegetables. The beverage was always the strong, hot, sweetened tea, of which the Carriers are so fond.

During these days of communal rejoicing the villagers took delight in a game similar to tug-of-war. The contest was between two clans, lined up with a long rope between them — one clan on the inside of the house and the other on the outside. The challenge was to see which clan could pull the other through the window of the house.

The people of Tachie were also familiar with the old custom of 'churching', which was probably introduced by the early Fathers, and entailed religious preparations before and after childbirth. After a child had been born, an Indian mother would wait at the church entrance reluctant to enter until the priest greeted her and conducted her inside. A death in the village was signified by the flag in front of the church. If the deceased were a child the flag flew at half-mast; if an adult, at full-mast. Another old custom was the choosing of a Church Chief from among the villagers. His responsibility would include, even up until today, the ringing of the bell to call everyone to prayer, to the celebration of the mass, and to the recitation of the Angelus. He also served as mediator and disciplinarian in matters of faith and morals.

Consequently the church served as a location to punish villagers who had misbehaved. The culprits would be brought before the Church Chief who would tie their hands behind their backs and leave them to stand in front of or inside the church — objects of ridicule to those who passed. The Sisters of the Child Jesus in their *Chronicles* wrote:

Occasionally we saw an Indian woman standing in the aisle, her hands tied behind her back. She had misbehaved and was doing public penance.

At times this treatment would get out of hand, as in the case of a young Indian man from Fort George. It was the custom for a man to write a love song to a girl if he had aspirations of marriage. To do so, was a promise of marriage in her eyes. The breach of such a promise in the case of one young man, had serious consequences. He appeared to regret his melodious commitment for when the wedding day arrived he was nowhere to be found. It was not until the following year that he dared venture back into Tachie, thinking that feelings of resentment and shame would have eased. Such was not the case; he was seized, hog-tied, and left in front of the church to wait his punishment. The unfortunate young man was treated with such hostility and brutality that he died within the day.

Downstream from St. Cecelia's on the sandy shores at Fort St. James is the third oldest and most beautiful of the temples on Stuart Lake. Father Maurice wrote:

... in the spring of 1873 they [Fathers Le Jacq and Blanchet and the Indian people] established the post which was thenceforth to bear the name of Our Lady of Good Hope ... A short distance from Fort St. James, Father Blanchet put up a temporary house and commenced the construction of a church which was to become the pride of the north.

A vivid description of the construction of Our Lady of Good Hope is given by Kay Cronin in her book *Cross in the Wilderness*, published by Mitchell Press in 1960.

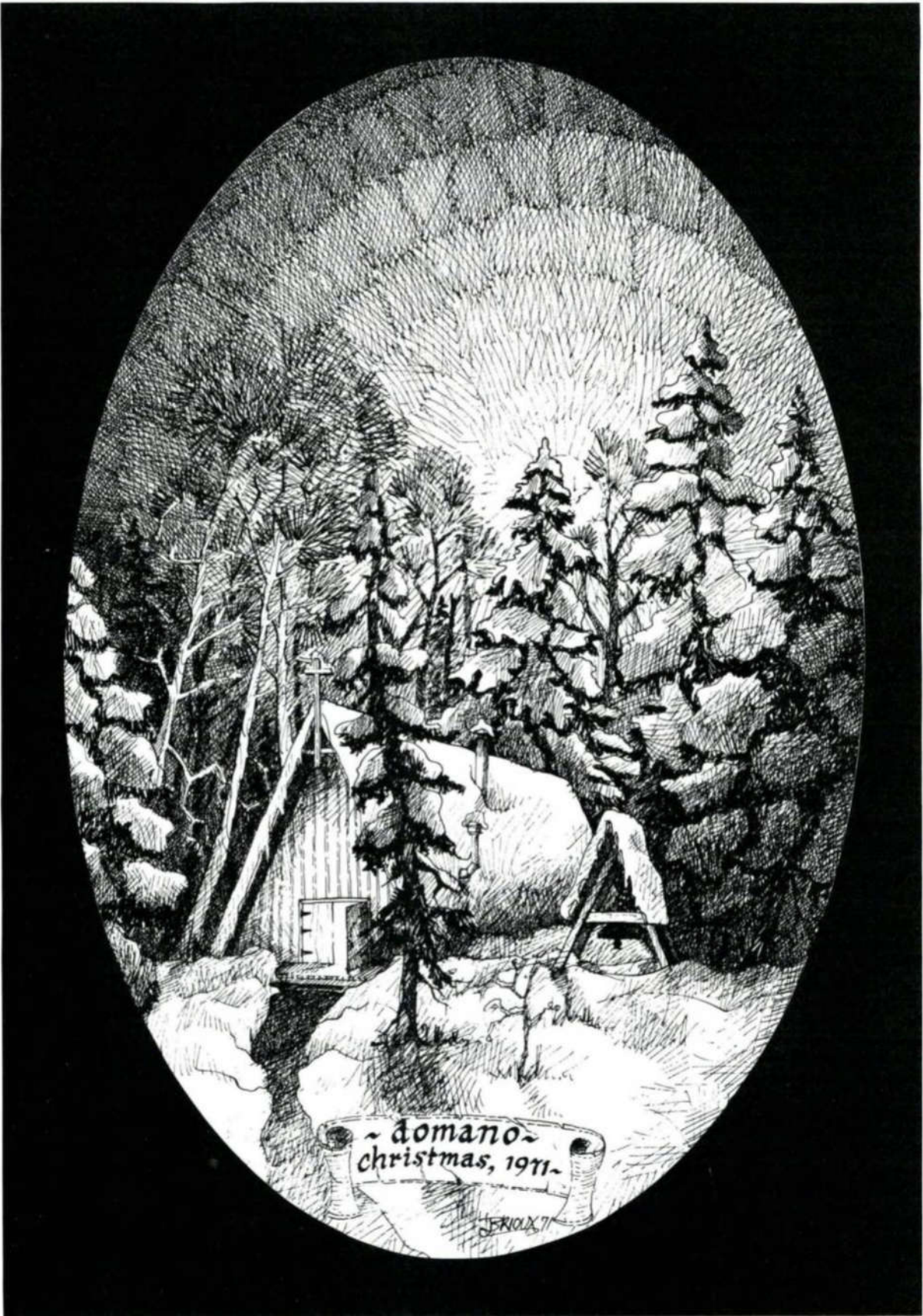
Both Mrs. Margaret Seymour of Prince George, and Louis Billy Price of Fort St. James, at that time aged ten and seven respectively, had vivid memories of the building of that northern mission.

While Father Le Jacq concentrated on the spiritual needs of the Indians, Father Blanchet started the erection of a church. On foot and through deep snow and across the frozen lake he toured the district for miles around looking for the kind of timber he wanted. He located some on the far side of the lake, three miles across the water from the mission site. His only tools were an axe, a hammer and a rule. He had no horses or wagon for hauling. Here, in the words of Louis Billy Prince, is how he solved the problem of getting the timber across the frozen lake to the mission site.

'Little Father get rope, fifty foot rope, and twenty Indian men. And twenty women. He cut timber other side of lake. He tie rope on log. They pull it - men, women, all together - across the lake to church. Big logs. They pull two logs a day like this. Take long time to build church. But people happy. Make big noise. Sing. Shout. Pull logs, enough for church.'

Mrs. Seymour remembered that it took weeks to complete the log-dragging operation. She said the women of the tribe cooked the food for the working party. And although she and her sister Philomena were only little girls at the time, they helped Father Blanchet split shakes and make nails for the roof.

In the early 1900s, a tower was added to the turret and the whole building was sheathed in wood siding, giving Our Lady of Good Hope a gothic appearance. A wooden ball and cross were carved by Benoit Prince for the pinnacle of the steeple. John Prince of Fort St. James remembers that when he was about fifteen years old, an Indian man named Seymour from Fort George,



accepted the challenge to shin up the steeple with the huge ball and cross in his arms and plant it firmly on its pedestal. To John this was a courageous feat, demanding strength and fearlessness.

The bell was blessed by Bishop Durieu in June 1883, and was christened St Joseph, an appropriate name considering the labour involved in the construction of the church. At the ceremony Chief Moise Taix and his wife represented the Indian population of Fort St. James and James and Philomene Boucher represented the white population. The following day, June 27, the Bishop blessed the church. On 18 March 1883, the famed Okanagan missionary, Father M. C. Pandosy visited the northern mission and blessed the Stations of the Cross.

The huge bell called 'the order of the day' and as Our Lady of Good Hope was the main mission, its peals brought the Indian people from all directions to celebrate the joyous festivities of midnight mass on Christmas eve. In earlier days Indian folk would come by dog-team from up the lake, from Manson Creek, Stellako, Cheslatta and Nautley, and by horse and sleigh from the Stoney Creek and Vanderhoof area. They would stay with friends and relatives for the whole season between Christmas and New-year's day. Within the church was a huge cast-iron stove that created a warm and friendly atmosphere for the gatherings.

When Father N. Coccola first arrived at Our Lady of Good Hope in 1905 he wrote:

... the church was big enough for the village population but surely too small when outsiders came to visit.

The Sisters of the Child Jesus recorded in their 'Memoirs':

We always had high Mass on Sunday. The church contained no pews. The Indians sat on the floor - the women complacently nursing their infants. Everyone sang the Mass. The music was rich as there were as many notes as there were Indians.

On a Sunday the children would have catechism at 12:00 p.m. and then in the evening benediction would be celebrated. Mrs Margaret Nooski of Nautley remembered that most folk would try to attend mass throughout the week as well as on Sundays and feast days. There was no drinking in those days, she recalled. Many celebrations must have been enjoyed by the inhabitants of Fort St James on those frosty nights years ago.

The Christmas of 1917 was not among the happier memories. The Sisters of the Child Jesus, having been invited by Bishop Bunoz, came by boat and finally by horse and buggy to Our Lady of Good Hope mission on 1 September 1917 just as the influenza epidemic of 1918 hit the surrounding districts.

Father Allard, who was at the mission that winter, recorded the progress of the epidemic in his diary.

'For the first one that died at the Mission I recited the prayers in the church and at the grave' wrote Father Allard. 'The others were brought in two or three at a time, but I could not go to the graveyard with all of them. In fact, several bodies were piled up in an empty

cabin because there were no graves ready. A large common grave was dug... When I was thus surrounded with the dead and the dying the news reached me that Pinci on the lake, one mile from the mission, and Tatchi, twenty-five miles away, were also struck with the epidemic... Finally, seeing how fast some poor souls were dispatched into eternity after being touched by the sickness, I hurried to go to the rescue of the Pinci and Tatchi people.'

The Sisters of the Child Jesus lost one of their own during the sad outbreak, a young Irish Sister by the name of Madeline who died 4 April 1918.

Margaret Nooski recalled that her family was spared the effects of the influenza, having been at Carp Lake at the time. However while travelling through the bush, she and her family happened upon an Indian who was stricken with the dreaded disease. In an effort to build up his resistance he had constructed a lean-to affair composed of spruce boughs. These he had ignited so a great amount of smoke filled the interior. He would then walk back and forth through the smoke until he felt better. In the end he rid himself of the affliction completely.

Today Our Lady of Good Hope is in need of restoration; each year the flood waters of Stuart Lake continue to eat at the shore threatening her foundations. There is a regular Sunday mass celebrated in the summer months, but in the winter she is closed tight against the bitter winds, left alone to echo the praises and joys of the celebrations of former Christmas eves.

Throughout the northern interior of British Columbia there are many such temples. An example of a new style of church is the Frontier Apostle and Domano Chapel at Prince George College, Prince George. Domano Chapel, Do-mine Ma-ne No-biscum or Lord Stay with Us, is the seat of the Frontier Apostolate program begun by Bishop Fergus O'Grady in 1956, in the Diocese of Prince George. The chapel is affectionately known as 'The Bishop's Cathedral', but a humbler cathedral is yet to be found; Domano Chapel expresses the true poverty of spirit.

Built to be symbolic of the North, Domano Chapel is made of spruce and has a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty. It was completed on 25 July 1960 and the following day Father Bogues, who supervised the chapel's construction, was killed in an automobile accident. On 27 July 1960, as the first mass was celebrated in the chapel, funeral services for Father Bogues were conducted in Vancouver. The Stations of the Cross are the work of Father B. Fransen, and the bell was donated through the generosity of Father J. Hettrich. Thirteen midnight masses on Christmas eves have been held at the Domano Chapel. An oil stove has replaced the old cast-iron wood-burning stove and the singing is still beautiful. The sense of family is strong in the hearts of the people and the feeling of love and joy of Christmas is fully manifest. ♦



Train No. 76 heading south near Venice, Alberta, with thirty-four cars in tow.

By Train to Fort McMurray

Text and Photographs by JAMES B. ARMSTRONG

EVERY SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY EVENING at five o'clock a mixed train of the Northern Alberta Railways leaves Edmonton and heads north. Its destination is Fort McMurray, largest settlement in northeastern Alberta, site of the Athabasca tar sands, and jumping-off point for the Northwest Territories. Because of an overnight stop in Lac la Biche, one hundred and twenty-five miles up the line, the train does not reach Fort McMurray until late the following afternoon. There it drops off the cars that it has brought north, and assembles a new train for the return trip to Edmonton. This train, which consists primarily of empty tank cars, leaves the depot at Waterways, a mile or so from Fort McMurray, every Tuesday and Friday morning at ten-thirty. By that evening it is in Lac la Biche, where it remains overnight, and by noon the next day it is in Edmonton.

Few people ever ride the train between Edmonton and Lac la Biche since there is a bus that makes the trip in just over three hours, half the time required by the train. Between Lac la Biche and Fort McMurray, however, no highway comes within thirty miles of the railway, and the train is filled with Indian and Métis

people travelling to and from the small settlements along the way.

One Sunday in June, 1972, I boarded the train with a round-way ticket to Waterways in my pocket. Our departure was finally signalled by two blasts on the horn way up at the other end of the train. Moments later, lurching and clanking, we pulled slowly out of Dunvegan Yards, headquarters and southern terminus of the Northern Alberta Railways, and headed north towards Carbondale, the junction that marks the beginning of the three-hundred-mile line through northeastern Alberta to Waterways and Fort McMurray. Although we were already thirty minutes late there was little reason to be concerned. With only a single passenger aboard, the railway was not in danger of losing business. No other trains were scheduled until the following morning when No. 31, the daily freight would leave for Grande Prairie.

Just over an hour ago I had purchased my ticket; for eighteen dollars I'd bought myself four days of mixed train riding on the NAR. Knowing as little as I do about northern Canada the purchase was something of a gamble. The time-table in my pocket, in fact, represented all I knew of what lay ahead. That night I would be in Lac la Biche; tomorrow night in Fort McMurray, Tuesday night back in Lac la Biche. Beyond this the time-table told me little. Bon Accord, Ellscoff, Tweedie,

The author, a recent graduate of Williams College, Massachusetts, has a particular interest in railroad history.

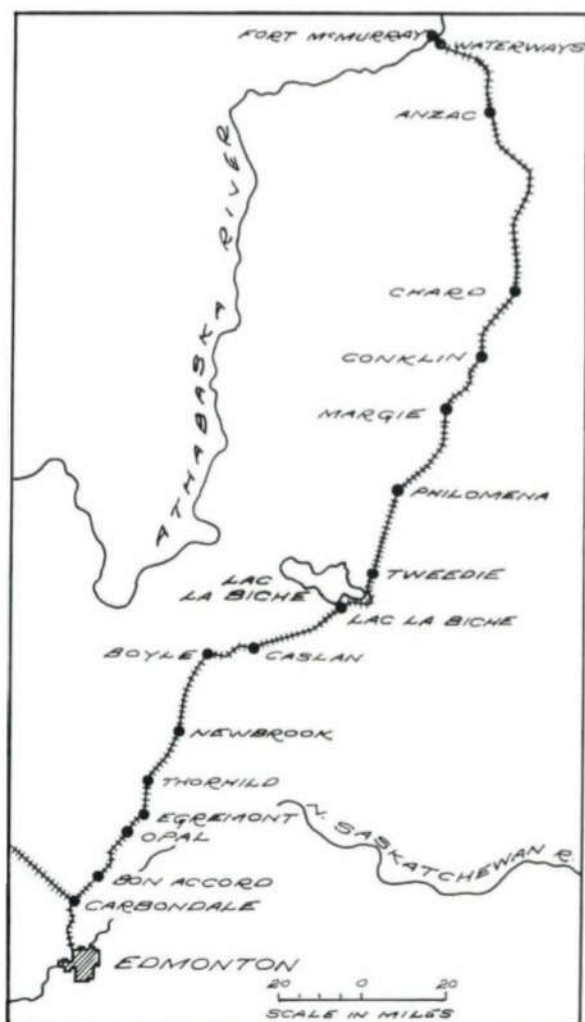
Pitlochrie, Cheecham were simply names on a map, hours and minutes on a schedule. Likewise, I had no idea who Carl Whiteman was, why the inhabitants of Margie and Devenish wouldn't go near Edwards Lake, or how a form 19Y train order differed from a form 19R. Between Sunday and Wednesday when I returned to Dunvegan Yards I would learn these things.

Within minutes we left Edmonton behind and were out in the open country. Everything was green after the heavy rains of the past few weeks. As we approached the Sturgeon River, a tributary of the North Saskatchewan, I had my first full view of the train. It was stretched out around a long curve and I could see from one end to the other. In the lead were two twelve-hundred-horse-power diesel-electric locomotives, each painted smartly in blue and grey with a yellow band around the middle. Immediately behind them was a string of empty flat cars. They were the first cars to be dropped off and were going as far as Egremont, forty miles up the line. They were followed by some box cars, most of which were from the Canadian Pacific Railway. One sported the CPR's

new red, white, and black colours which contrasted sharply with the traditional maroon of the other cars. There was another flat car, this one loaded with Massey Ferguson farm equipment and bound for Boyle. Next came the tank cars. There were twenty-eight of them in all, half the entire train. The gasoline and fuel oil they carried was to be transferred to barges at Waterways and shipped up to the Northwest Territories by way of the Athabasca, Slave, and Mackenzie Rivers. Following them were a few more box cars, all heading to Waterways. Bringing up the rear was an empty way car and a large, old-fashioned baggage car, and caboose-coach No. 307. The rain that had been threatening all afternoon began to fall just as I leaned from the rear vestibule to take a photograph of the train. I quickly shot the picture and ducked back inside.

Being alone enabled me to be inquisitive without feeling self-conscious. No. 307 was an unusual car and worthy of close inspection. Apparently it was built as a coach, probably fifty years ago, but was converted at some point to carry crew as well as passengers — the former in considerably more comfort than the latter, as I was soon to discover. The interior of the car was divided into two sections by a partition with the crew's quarters facing forward, thus giving the conductor and brakeman easy access to the baggage car. Apart from an occasional coat of paint the passenger section looked as though it had remained unchanged since the car was new. The seats were hard and uncomfortable. At the back stood a large oil stove which must be the most important feature of the car during the winter months when the temperature drops to as low as -50°F . Across the aisle from it was a small basin that was fed by a water tank which hung from the ceiling. Along the wall were kerosene lanterns whose shiny appearance gave the impression that the electric light fixtures above them no longer served a purpose. All in all, the interior decorators of No. 307 had sacrificed comfort and convenience for utility and durability.

Shortly before we reached Carbondale the conductor came back to get my ticket. He was dressed as a railwayman should be — in hickory-stripe denim overalls and an engineer's cap. He was friendly and polite, and upon learning that I would be riding his train all the way up the line and back, invited me to join him and the brakeman. Gladly relinquishing my hard seat I followed him forward. What the passenger section lacked in warmth, the crew's section more than made up for. It was an inviting place, a curious and fascinating mixture of the professional and the domestic — a business office combined with a kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom. At the centre of the car, just inside the partition, were bay windows which took the place of the cupola normally found on a caboose. Here the brakeman or conductor could sit and watch over the train as it rolled along; during the next few days I found myself spending many hours perched on these seats. Immediately ahead of





Conductor Carl Whiteman, number one man on the run, and an excellent cook, at milepost 235 near Quigley.

them were two large bunks, each hung with mosquito netting. The conductor's desk stood at the foot of one of the bunks, and a dining table at the foot of the other. Neatly arranged on the top of the desk and in the cubby-holes above was an assortment of way-bills, reports, time-tables, slips, forms, and orders. The following morning after the orders for the day had been received from the agent at the Lac la Biche depot the conductor gave me the orders, or 'flimsies' from the evening's run as a memento of the trip. At the far end of the car were two stoves, one oil and one propane, a sink and draining board, and closets for food, clothing, and equipment. From the wall hung pots of various shapes and sizes.

I soon learned that the conductor was Carl Whiteman and the brakeman Bill Wintermute. Carl was sixty-one years old, and Bill, fifty-six. As conductor Carl was the number one man or, in railroad jargon, the 'brains' of the crew. Although the engineer had a more immediate control over the train it was the conductor who was ultimately responsible for its safe passage since no action could be taken without his instructions or approval. Carl had worked for Northern Alberta Railways since 1929, first as a steward, then as a brakeman, and finally as a conductor. His knowledge of the NAR and of the people and places it served was extensive, and during the course of our journey I learned much from talking with him. He

was a genial, amiable man and, as I discovered to my great delight, an excellent cook.

North of Carbondale older lighter rails restricted our speed to 20 mph. Travelling at such a pace made it easy to understand why many preferred to ride the bus — although our speed did give us time to fully appreciate the day lilies that flourished along the right-of-way. Another flower, which Bill called the Alberta rose, was beginning to bud but had a long way to go before it would be in full flower. Carl told me that at one time a good deal of domestic coal was mined in this area. Although some veins remain untapped to this day the demand fell off years ago. In its place arose a market for oil, a resource in which Alberta abounds. While the major fields lie to the south, some petroleum is extracted north of Edmonton, and as the train rolled along I caught glimpses of single pumps standing awkwardly in the middle of fields of wheat.

On the flat, unbroken plains of eastern Alberta, grain elevators acted as sign posts: seen from a distance they announced the existence of a town; seen close to they proclaimed in bold letters, the name of that town and thus enabled the visitor to distinguish between otherwise identical communities. Their physical prominence was indicative of their importance to the economy of the region; nearly every town we travelled through the first evening supported two, three, or more elevators.

At Egremont we stopped to set out the empty flat cars. By the time we returned on Wednesday morning they would be loaded with rock. After we took them back to Dunvegan Yards they would be shipped out over the main line to Watino, Alberta, the site of a recent washout on the Smoky River. As we headed out of town, our switching completed, some children who had been carefully watching the operation ran alongside the train. 'Tell your engineer to go faster' they cried. 'We can jog as fast as you.'

Thirty-five minutes and eight miles later we paused briefly at Thorhild to spot three CPR box cars beside an elevator. Then we were on our way again without a stop for over an hour. Carl used the time to prepare a light supper of soup, bread, and cheese which he invited me to share with him and Bill. It was after nine o'clock, although still light outside, by the time we sat down to our meal. There was no reason to hurry and Newbrook, Alpen and Ellscoot slipped by before we were finished. At Boyle we dropped off the loaded flat car. My initial impression of the town was not a complimentary one; its wide, muddy streets and abandoned one-storey buildings gave it a drab and uninviting air.

Shortly after leaving Boyle, Carl and I washed the supper dishes using water that had been heated on the oil stove. It was the first of many times during the trip but it was a job of which I did not tire for as I stood at the sink, swaying gently with the movement of the train, the clickety-clack, clickety-clack of the wheels passing over a rail joint came up to me through the drain.

At Caslan, milepost 87 (eighty-seven miles north of Carbondale and 101 miles north of Dunvegan Yards), we unloaded a mattress from the baggage car and left it in a small wooden building adjacent to the tracks; the person who had ordered it would apparently know where to find it. Back on board Carl reached for the Motorola radio-telephone that enabled him to communicate with the engineer and second brakeman almost half a mile away. 'Highball' he called. 'Highball it is' came the reply and within moments we were heading north again.

Slowly almost reluctantly, night fell and with it came more rain. It was after eleven by the time we reached Lac la Biche. Carl had suggested that I sleep in the coach rather than spend the night at the hotel in town. Since it was possible to remove the backs from the seats I could place two of them end to end across the top of three seats and make a sizable, if not very comfortable, bed. In case anyone wandered in during the night looking for shelter I left my camera and knapsack with Bill and Carl up forward. Within minutes I was asleep.

On Monday, I walked around the streets of Lac la Biche. The main intersection of the town was at 101st Street and Alberta Avenue. From there it was a short walk to the York Hotel, Coutney's Billiards & Barber Shop, the Hudson's Bay Company store and the cinema. The town, with a population of about 2,000, also supported a hardware store, a dry-goods store, some supermarkets, a number of gas stations, a drug store, and a lunch counter. Bound at one end by the lake and at the other by the railway, 101st Street was very wide, and at eight o'clock in the morning virtually deserted.

According to Carl, back in the 1910s when the railway was being built, Lac la Biche was considered an excellent location for a resort. Plans were drawn up for developing the area and a hotel was constructed on the shores of the lake. Before it was ready to open for business, however, its chief promoter was killed when a boat in which he was sailing capsized during a violent and unexpected storm. Once news of the accident had spread it was difficult to persuade people to vacation at the lake. The hotel's doors remained closed, and eventually the project was abandoned. Judging, however, from the large number of cottages that line the shores of the lake today, the enthusiasm of the original developers was not without foundation.

After enjoying a leisurely breakfast at the coffee shop in the York Hotel and looking around town, I wandered slowly back to the depot. Everything had been quiet when I left, but now there was a flurry of activity. On the platform passengers were milling about, almost all of them Indian or Métis people, and a second caboose-coach (No. 304) was added to handle the morning's crowd. Up in the baggage car Bill was taking on less-than-carload freight: a wringer washing machine that was going to Conklin (it weighed 100 lbs. and the shipping cost for the eighty-mile trip was \$5.25), a television set, bags of horse feed, a large, plastic swimming pool, and



At Tweedie, after the swimming pool is unloaded, forty bales of hay are taken aboard.

boxes of groceries for the sectionman at milepost 235. He was also loading packets of mail and magazines to be delivered along the way.

We were forty-five minutes behind schedule by the time we left Lac la Biche. It was overcast again and there was a threat of rain in the air as we wound around the shores of Big Bay heading toward Barnegat, the easternmost point of the lake. The noise of our train startled some birds that had been resting in the reeds and put them suddenly into flight. They circled for a moment, then landed further off. We did not stop at Barnegat, but turned north towards Tweedie, eight miles up the line. There we unloaded the swimming pool, delivered a bundle of mail, and picked up forty bales of hay to take to Chard. 'Highball, the man says' called Bill over the Motorola. 'Highball it is' came the reply and we continued northward.

At Philomena, milepost 151, the train ground to a halt and Carl and I walked up to the engines. I was introduced to Bob Coffin, our engineer and the voice over the radio, who wished to know how the train was riding back at the tail end; it was a heavy load, he explained, and he had to work the two engines with care; he hoped it hadn't been too bumpy a ride. Up in the cab with him was Mitro Goriniuk, the second brakeman, a small cheerful man whom I had seen inspecting the train



On Monday, heading north, Brakeman Bill Wintermute hands down mail as the train passes through a small Indian settlement.

at Dunvegan Yards. After comparing notes with Carl, Bob ran the train slowly past while Carl checked for hotboxes — overheated journal bearings — and defective brakes. All was well, and we jumped aboard as No. 307 rumbled slowly by.

By now we were far beyond farming country. For the remaining one hundred and thirty miles to Waterways we would be travelling through a wilderness of spruce, tamarack, white poplar, and jack pine that was relieved rarely, and then very temporarily, by small Indian settlements.

As the morning wore on some of the younger passengers came and stood shyly at the doorway of the partition that separated the coach from the caboose. They were hungry and wished to buy sandwiches and drinks. The menu was limited: luncheon meat or bologna sandwiches, 50 cents; root beer, cola, orange, or grape soda, 25 cents. Each sandwich was made to order, and as business got brisk, Bill enlisted my help. I hadn't counted heads, but guessed that there were twenty or twenty-five passengers aboard, and each seemed to be ravenous. The money we collected went into a kitty from which additional supplies were purchased. Any profits eventually were divided among the permanent members of the crew.

Shortly before one o'clock we passed Edwards Lake at milepost 180. It seemed to be of normal size, colour,

and appearance. What I didn't realize on this bright summer's day was that the lake was haunted. Back in 1912 when the Alberta Great Waterways Railway Company was conducting its original survey there was a civil engineer named Edwards in the party. One evening, when the day's work had been completed, Edwards went for a swim in the lake that now bears his name. He was never seen again alive nor was his body recovered. To this day the inhabitants of the nearby villages believe that the ghost of Edwards haunts the lake. A small marker that can be seen from the train was recently erected in Edwards's memory.

On board for this part of the trip were a young man and his fiancée. They were travelling to Conklin where they would begin to teach in September. They had both just graduated from university; Larry with a degree in physics and mathematics and Pat with one in physical education. They had never been in northern Alberta and were anxious to see the town they'd signed up for. They were excited about the coming year, especially Pat who eagerly told Bill of their plans. In addition to their salaries, which together totalled almost \$17,000, they would be receiving over \$1,000 as compensation for their virtual isolation. The couple they were replacing had decided to teach at an even more remote post, one that could be reached only by canoe or bushplane.

At Conklin, the largest of the settlements between Lac la Biche and Waterways, it took some time to unload all the packages and parcels from the baggage car. I asked Carl what the people of the village did for a living. Many of the men, he told me, ran trap lines during the winter catching mink, beaver, muskrat, and lynx. A few of them worked on section gangs, or maintenance-of-way crews, for the railway. Aside from this there are few jobs.

By four-thirty we were in Anzac. It was raining, as it had been intermittently all afternoon. We had stopped only three times since Conklin: once at Chard to let off a student nurse who was taking her training in Edmonton and returning home for the holidays; once in the middle of nowhere to let off our last passenger, an elderly Indian laden with groceries; and once at milepost 235 to pick up three vacationing fishermen, one of whom passed around some freshly smoked jackfish. The fish were tough — the result, Carl explained, of insufficient smoking.

A few miles on it was time to check again for hotboxes and bad brakes. Much of the twenty miles to Waterways was down a 2½ per cent grade and it was important that everything be working properly. Carl found all was well, and as he climbed aboard No. 307 asked me to give Bob the 'highball'. We moved at a crawl, the smell of brakeshoe smoke strong in the clean, still air. As we wound our way down it was possible to see in some of the bank cuts, traces of bitumen-rich tar sand, the resource responsible for the change in the character of the Fort McMurray area during the past five years.



Train No. 78 beginning the return trip south from Waterways, Alberta.

Bill pointed out places where the tracks were to be re-routed, thus eliminating some of the sharper curves. Shortly after six o'clock we reached the Clearwater River which, because of all the recent rain was high and very muddy. Minutes later, three hundred miles and almost twenty-five hours after leaving Dunvegan Yards, we came to a stop in front of the Waterways depot.

There was much to be done before the crew could rest. After uncoupling the four rear cars — the way car, the baggage car, and the two caboose-coaches — Carl and Bill got off to help Bob and Mitro with the switching. All the cars that had been brought north had to be delivered that evening and it was a while before the four returned. After a dinner of liver and onions prepared by Carl which the five of us ate in the caboose, Mitro and I washed the dishes. Bill left to sell insurance; Bob, to visit friends in the bunkhouse; and Carl, to see an aunt and uncle who would be celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary in a few days.

Rather than sleep in the coach again I decided to try to find a room in town. Since Waterways was little more than a depot, a general store, and a post office, I had to look in Fort McMurray. With the interest in the tar sands Fort McMurray had become a booming place of five thousand people. It had a number of schools, parochial as well as public, a town library, four baseball diamonds, a hockey rink, and — a sure sign of progress — a wide,

paved main street. Driving along this thoroughfare I saw in quick succession Pond Crescent, Pond School, Pond Motel, and the Pond Shopping Centre. Each was named after the fur trader Peter Pond who in 1778 went into Athabasca 'a country hitherto unknown but from Indian report'. He recorded his observations of the tar sands, a resource that was later determined to cover some 30,000 square miles. The exploration of the area has now culminated in the construction of a \$235 million mining, extraction, and processing plant twenty miles north of Fort McMurray. Tests indicated that as many as 300 billion barrels of synthetic crude oil could be extracted from the tar sands with an equal number of barrels available once technology was improved. Although Bill thought I should visit the plant the others said that it was so big, and security so tight it was hardly worth the trip.

There was not a room to be found in all of Fort McMurray and as I headed back to Waterways I resigned myself to another night stretched out across the seats of the coach. Upon returning, however, I found an invitation to stay in the bunkhouse. As I walked over with Mitro, fighting off the mosquitoes that were attacking my ankles, hands, and ears, I congratulated myself on my bad luck in town. When we arrived Bob was chatting with the assistant agent, a young man who had just passed his qualifying examination, and with Gary, a



The sectionman closes the switch after train No. 76 joins the main line at Carbondale, Alberta.

member of the depot crew. It was after ten o'clock, but the sun was still high in the sky and it did not seem proper to consider going to bed. We sat and talked for another hour or so and by then, although it was still light, I was tired enough to disregard it.

On Tuesday I awoke to a beautiful morning. Bob and Mitro had already gone off to assemble the southbound train; Carl and Bill were in the caboose preparing breakfast. They invited me to join them and although I was a bit apprehensive about pickerel and home fries for breakfast, I soon discovered they were delicious.

It was almost eleven-thirty by the time we were ready to leave. Our train was made up of thirty-four cars, three of them flat cars carrying Caterpillar earth-moving equipment bound for Calgary. Each weighed eighteen tons and had to be separated from the others by two empty cars. Of the remaining cars, three were box cars loaded with lumber and the rest were empty tankers. The coaches were full of sixth graders on their way to Anzac for a picnic at Gregoire Lake. Between the steep climb and the speed restriction placed on the train owing to the oversized 'Cats' we did not reach Anzac until one o'clock. There we lost a few more minutes. 'Highball' called Carl after the last of the children had tumbled off. Silence. He tried again. This time Bob answered 'In a moment, Carl. Mitro's out picking blueberries.'

We did not stop again for two hours. I spent most of the time sitting at a bay window or standing by the open

side door of the baggage car. There was little variation in the scenery: muskeg, jack pine, balsam fir, and spruce stretching off as far as the eye can see, occasionally a slight rise, but for the most part a perfectly flat landscape. I had noticed throughout the journey that the roadbed was in excellent condition: new ties, clean ballast, and, north of Egremont, heavy rail. Carl told me that during the early years of the railway the roadbed was in such poor shape that derailments and breakdowns were frequent, and a round-trip often took two or three weeks to complete. However, since the arrival of the diesels, which carry their engine housing between the wheels of their trucks and were thus particularly vulnerable to derailments, a great deal of work had been done to upgrade the track and right-of-way.

At Chard we stopped to unload two containers of propane gas and to pick up a faulty car transmission that was being sent to Edmonton for repairs. I could not imagine what use anybody would have for a car in Chard, but apparently there was reason to warrant fixing it at considerable trouble and expense.

Shortly before four we crossed the Christina River and half an hour later we were in Conklin where the teachers, Larry and Pat, were waiting for us. They appeared to be in good spirits and I gathered that Conklin and its people had met with their approval. An elderly man also boarded the train, immediately assuming a seat in the caboose. His name was Herman Olson.



Bill Wintermute with a bouquet of day lilies to take home to his wife.

He was seventy-eight years old and was on his way to Norway to visit his brothers and sisters.

South of Edwards Lake we got word from Bob that there was a large moose standing in a clearing off to the right of the train, but he was gone by the time we reached the spot. A few miles further on, the two up front caught a glimpse of deer bounding into the woods.

We were nearly two hours behind schedule arriving in Lac la Biche. There was not much switching to be done and soon Bob, Mitro, and Tom, a member of the depot crew, joined the three of us in the caboose. It was after working hours and someone produced a bottle of whiskey. It had been a long day and the crew was happy to relax for a while. The talk, interrupted frequently by Bob's dry wit and Tom's easy laughter, revolved around the railway — bits of news and gossip picked up along the way concerning events on other subdivisions and men from other crews. Outside, all was quiet save for the occasional car along Alberta Avenue. As dusk began to fall Carl rose to light the Coleman lantern, and proceeded to cook a delicious dinner of pork chops, smothered in sauce with potatoes and salad. Once the dishes had been washed and dried it was off to the bunkhouse where I had the luxury of a room to myself.

In order to reach Edmonton by early afternoon we were scheduled to leave Lac la Biche at 6.30 Wednesday morning. Shortly after five I was awakened by Mitro as he left to help Bob with the switching. The sun was

already well up, and I spent the next hour photographing the train, the depot, and the crew. Each day our train had assumed a new number: on Sunday it was No. 75 and on Monday No. 77 (the odd number designating a northward run); yesterday, as we came south from Waterways, it was No. 78 and on Wednesday No. 76. Again I was the only passenger aboard on the stretch between Lac la Biche and Edmonton. The others — Larry, Pat, and Herman Olson — spent the night at the York Hotel and in a couple of hours would catch a bus that would have them in Edmonton well before we were there. Up in the cab was one of the railway's roadmasters who was on an inspection tour; there would not be much casual conversation over the Motorola this run. Shortly before seven we were under way — our most successful attempt of the trip to keep to schedule. There were various forms to be completed, but soon Bill was hard at work on breakfast. As I sat by an open bay window, slowly becoming mesmerized by the sunlight dancing through the leaves of the poplars that line the right-of-way, the morning air was spiked with the aroma of frying bacon. Ahead the train was whistling for a crossing, something we had heard rarely the past two days. It was a scene difficult to improve upon.

We did not stop until we reached Boyle where we spotted an empty box car by an Alberta Grain Pool elevator and picked up the now empty flat. The town looked different at this hour of the day, less temporary and more cordial and inviting. In the streets puppies were chasing and falling over each other while above them swallows were darting and diving. Then it was on to Thorhild, Egremont, and Opal where Bill climbed down from the caboose and walked forward a dozen cars. As we pulled out of town I saw him hanging on to the grab-irons of a tank car. Once we were out in the country he dropped off and calmly gathered a bouquet of day lilies to take home to his wife. He had suggested on Tuesday that they were losing their colour, but the bunch he showed me as he climbed aboard No. 307 was a blaze of bright orange.

What with the earth movers and the lighter rail it was slow going the rest of the way to Carbondale. Much of the distance, we paralleled Route 28/46, the main road between Edmonton and Lac la Biche. I felt like a seasoned member of the crew as I sat propped up against the window frame occasionally offering a flick-of-the-wrist greeting to the cars that rushed past us.

Shortly after one o'clock we reached Carbondale. Slowing down to a crawl we clattered across the switch points and rejoined the main line. Fourteen miles and forty-five minutes later we were back in Dunvegan Yards, the trip completed. Although I had to travel another two thousand miles, I was home in New York late that evening, just about the time that No. 75, the Northern Alberta Railways twice-weekly northbound train, ground to a halt in front of the Lac la Biche depot, one hundred and twenty-five miles up the line. ♦

Ellesmere and Axel Heiberg Islands

Eureka Sound, from Slidre Fiord.





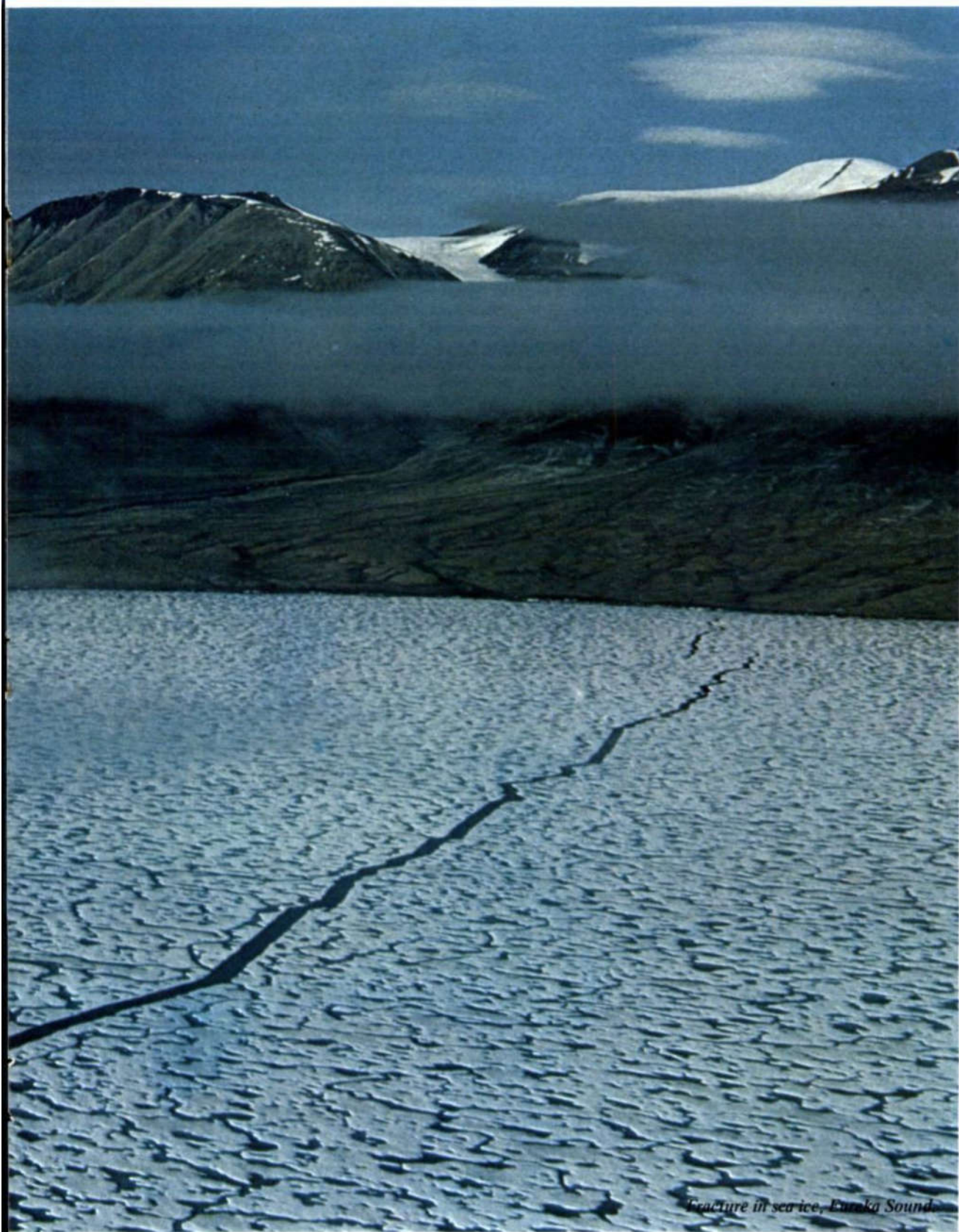
*There is comfort in knowing
of places on earth
where nature still dominates man
by its vastness and severity of climate.*

Photographs and text by ROBERT R. TAYLOR

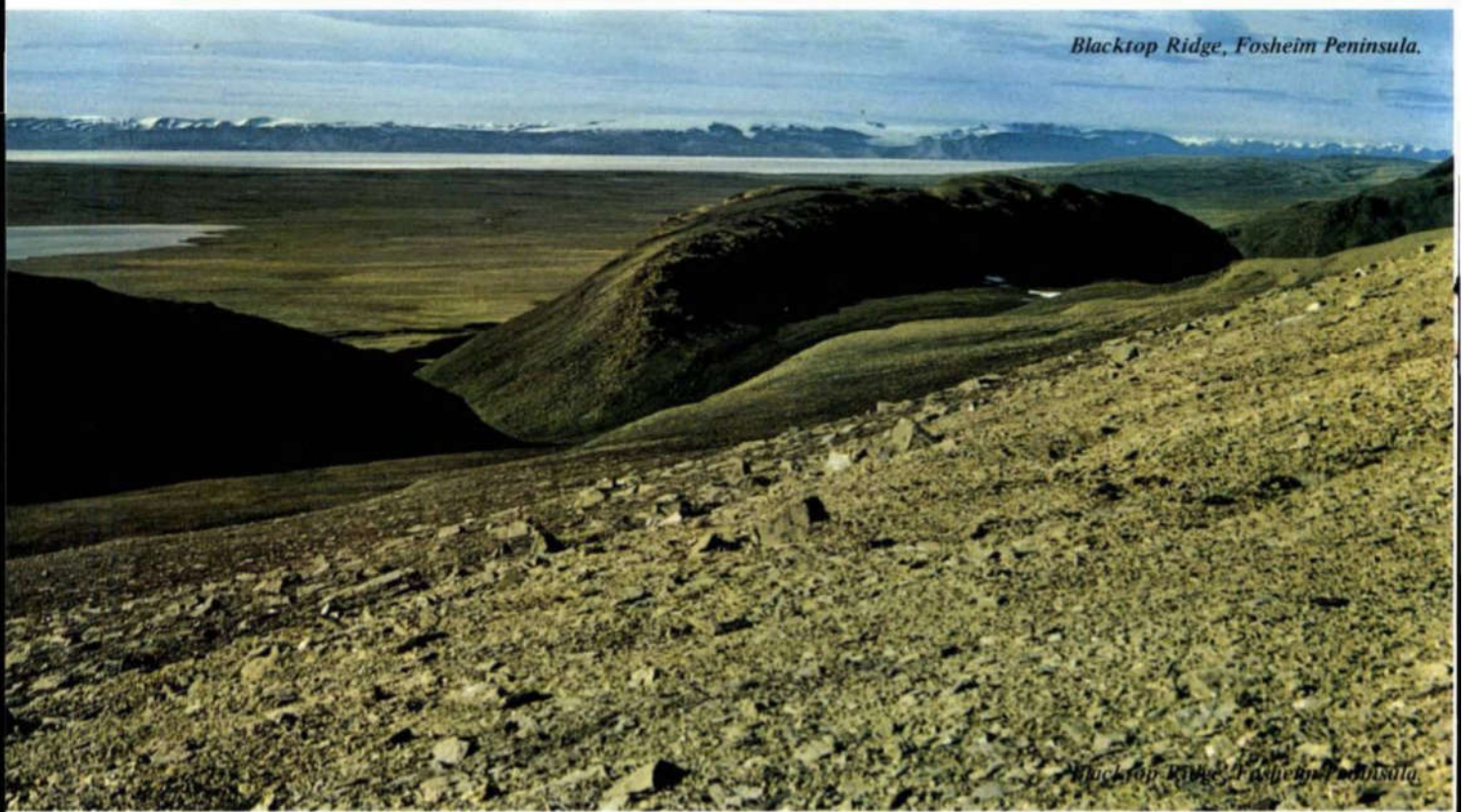


Landscape and glacier above, Makinson Inlet.



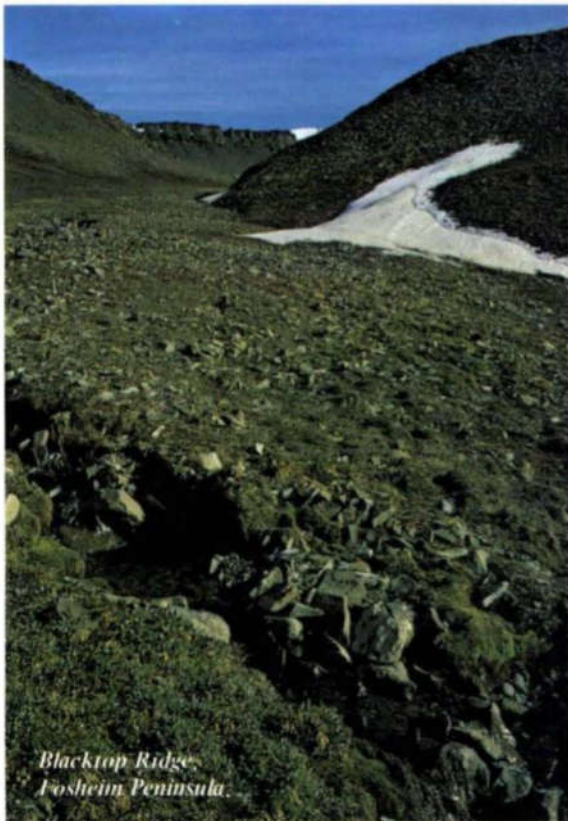


Fracture in sea ice, Foulka Sound



Blacktop Ridge, Fosheim Peninsula.

Blacktop Ridge, Fosheim Peninsula.



*Blacktop Ridge,
Fosheim Peninsula.*



Purple saxifrage, Makinson Inlet



Mokka Fiord, Axel Heiberg

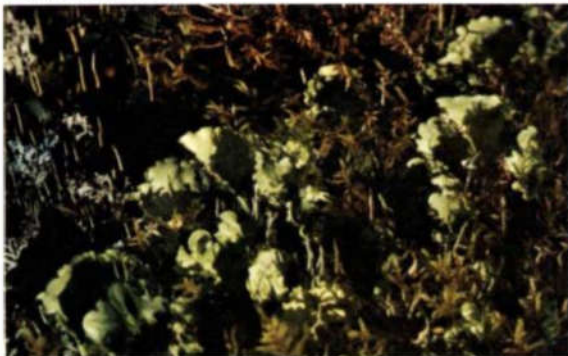


Skaure Fiord, Axel Heiberg



Open forest carpeted with reindeer moss.

Nephroma arcticum



British soldiers.



Lichens and crowberry gradually fill in a stone circle.



LICHENS

By P. Franks with photographs by Jim Franks.

Mr and Mrs Franks lived for three years in Schefferville where Jim Franks was manager at McGill's Subarctic Research Laboratory. They have a particular interest in the human and natural history of the region.

IN THE SUBARCTIC AREA of Schefferville, in northern Quebec, reindeer moss, *cladonia alpestris*, is the dominant lichen which gives the area its delicate varying colour. Cream is the colour on a sunny day, where growth is luxurious, deepening to yellow after a summer shower. The colour tone changes again depending on situation and weather condition from greenish cream through clear apple green to grey-green on more exposed places where the reindeer moss is particularly dry and stunted. This lichen is found where enough light steals through the trees to patches on the forest floor, or at the edge of the forest on open parkland.

In these parklands tamarack, dwarf birch, and blueberry are commonly found among the black and white spruce. A few leaves of the blueberry, *vaccinium angustifolium*, in their autumn colour are the perfect accent for the shrub-like reindeer moss.

Even in the damp, dark forest where mosses predominate, lichens are part of the forest floor. The green *nephroma arcticum* looks comfortable in its mossy bed. British soldiers (the fruiting body of a *cladonia* species) seem to grow best on well-rotted tree trunks. Scrub

birch grows in the lee of even high ridges, and a lovely pale grey-green to green-black lichen, *alectoria ochroleuca*, in turn takes advantage of its shelter and support.

Several different species can easily be noted in the general lichen carpet of the ridges and semi-tundra; *cestraria islandica*, *cestraria nivalis*, *alectoria ochroleuca*, *alectoria deliesii*, and *stereocaulon tomentosum*. Again the natural colour combination is perfect.

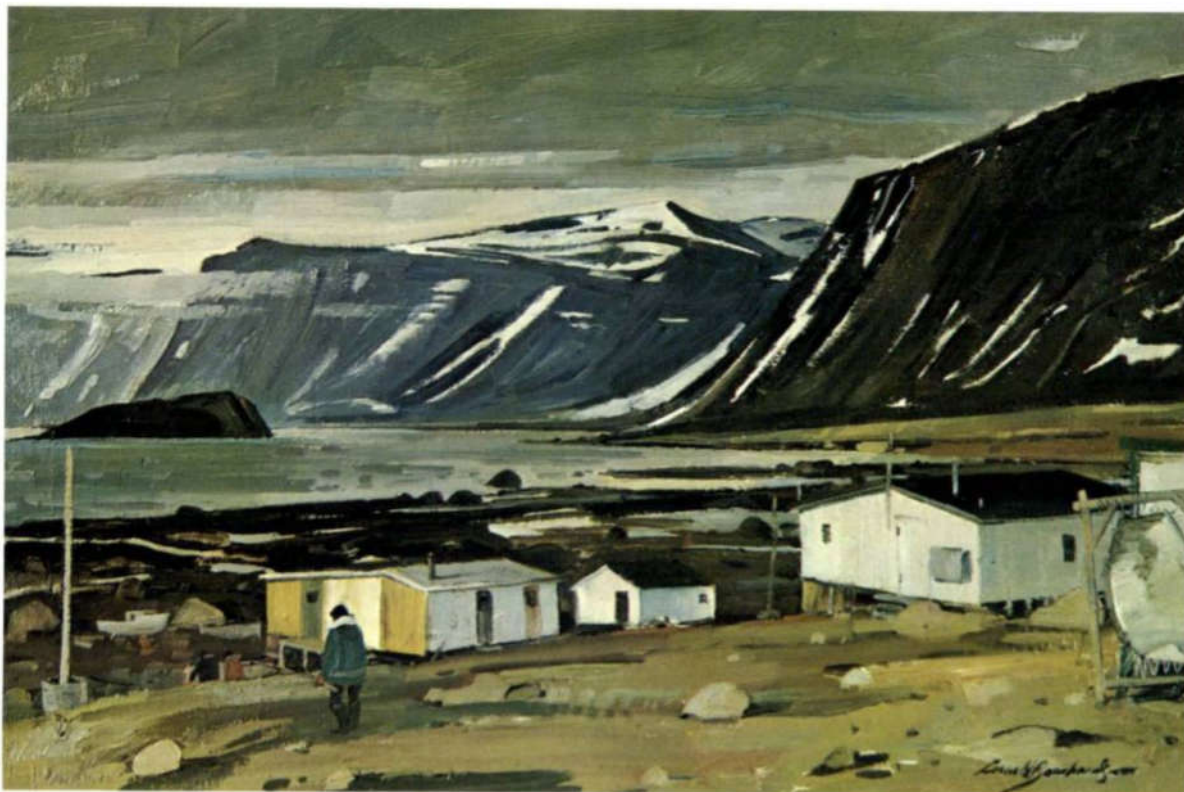
Let the geographers argue the nomenclature — stone circles, stone polygons or patterned ground. These natural phenomena caused by frost action in the active layer over permafrost are common in tundra, and pioneering lichens gradually fill in the circle as the action dies down. Crowberry, *empetrum nigrum*, is often the pioneer plant found in conjunction with lichens.

Paint lichens and rock tripe, *umbilicaria hyperborea*, even tackle bare rock surfaces, preparing the way for eventual plant growth.

The northern carpet of lichens cannot rival a gaudy tropical plant display. Its show is different, more subtle, and especially attractive to those with a discriminating eye for colour. ♦

Rock tripe, used as food in times of extremity by both Indians and explorers.





Looking up Pangnirtung Fjord from the Peyton-Cressman Lodge.

PANGNIRTUNG

By KENN HARPER

Paintings by LORNE BOUCHARD R.C.A.

Kenn Harper, principal of Inuujaaq school in Arctic Bay, Baffin Island, has a particular interest in the history of the Pangnirtung area.

On his first journey to the Arctic aboard the 'Liard River' in 1962, Lorne Bouchard painted and sketched the Mackenzie River from Hay River on Great Slave Lake to the Beaufort Sea. He made his first trip to the Eastern Arctic in March and April 1969, and has returned to Baffin Island three times since then.

FROM THE AIR the houses and tents of the small village seem to cling tenuously to the narrow strip of land between the mountains of the Cumberland Peninsula and the sparkling waters of South Pangnirtung Fjord. Pangnirtung, situated at 66° 08' north latitude almost straddles the Arctic Circle. On a mid-summer's night darkness is unknown, and natives and visitors alike follow the tidal outpour as far as the reef a few hundred yards offshore to try their hand at casting for char.

The name Pangnirtung — the place of many buck deer — refers to the great herds of caribou which, a century ago, grazed on the coastal plain in the summers. Although the settlement itself dates from 1921, the Cumberland Sound area has been, since 1820, the haunt of arctic whalers: Scots from Peterhead, Dundee, and Aberdeen and Americans from New Bedford, Groton,



Char fishing off Pangnirtung reef at low tide.

and New London. Some vessels wintered at shore stations on Kekerton and Blacklead Islands to take advantage of the spring whaling. The Eskimos were employed as whalers and as hunters to provide the crews with meat during the winter months.

Commander William Wakeham who landed at Kekerton in 1897 to hoist the British flag on Baffin Island, observed, 'In the neighbourhood of the whaling stations the natives are fast ceasing to be expert in the use of their old fashioned weapons, such as spears, small harpoons, bows and arrows, etc., as they are now pretty generally supplied with modern repeating arms, and there can be little doubt that those who have been brought up about the stations would be badly off were these closed and abandoned. The natives are highly spoken of by the captains of the whaling station; they are honest, faithful, and active in the hunt.'

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as profits from the whaling industry decreased, the whalers were replaced by fur traders who bought white fox and caribou skins from the Eskimos. In 1921 the Hudson's Bay Company established their Pangnirtung post midway along the north shore of Cumberland Sound. The location on the wide deep fiord was accessible by sea, although subject to high tides and violent winds which rip, at speeds that sometimes exceed 100 miles an hour,

through the tunnel of the Pangnirtung Pass in the winter and spring of each year.

The establishment in 1923 of a detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the building of a mission which included a small school and hospital did not change the pattern of the scattered Eskimo settlement. The Anglican Church had come originally to the area in 1894 when its mission in the Arctic Islands was built at the whaling centre on Blacklead Island ninety miles south. The first missionaries were the Reverend E. J. Peck and a young man named J. C. Parker who had some medical training. When they arrived at Blacklead Island on August 21, they found 171 Eskimo people living in about forty tents.

Mr Peck had a good knowledge of the Eskimo language from his earlier work among the people at Whale River and Fort George. He had adapted Eskimo to the syllabic system of writing devised earlier for the Cree Indians. The Four Gospels were printed in Eskimo syllabics and from these books, the people learned to read and write their language.

In 1928 St Luke's hospital was built at Pangnirtung and operated jointly by the mission and a doctor appointed by the federal government. The hospital was enlarged in 1939 to provide care for a greater number of older Eskimo people.



An Inuit family. The father has returned from hunting and is carving up a seal.

The Eskimo population continued to grow slowly in camps along both sides of Cumberland Sound until just over a decade ago when an outbreak of disease decimated the sled dogs. With their means of transportation gone, destitute families were air-lifted into Pangnirtung. New dogs from other settlements were provided, and most of the hunters returned briefly to their camps on the Sound.

In the following years school facilities in the village were expanded, and in 1966 a large-scale federal housing program brought families from the remaining campsites into the settlement. Today only a few dozen people remain at one small camp — Krepishaw — sixty miles distant on the south side of the Sound.

The territorial government at Yellowknife assumed responsibility for most government services in the North in 1970. In April 1972, Pangnirtung became one of the first Arctic communities to achieve hamlet status. Most of the decisions affecting the lives of the local people are now made by the elected members of the hamlet council.

Hunting is still an important economic factor in the life of the community. During the past four summers the airstrip has been enlarged and improved, and Nordair now schedules three flights weekly into the settlement. This service has stimulated a budding tourist industry, both in the village where the Peyton-Cressman Lodge provides accommodation and at the char-fishing camp at Clearwater Fiord, fifty-five miles away. The creation of Baffin Island National Park, a wilderness preserve that includes the spectacular glaciers of the Penny Ice Cap, the mountains of Cumberland Sound, and the Pangnirtung Pass, was announced in April 1972. Mountaineers and sportsmen will bring employment to Eskimo guides and stimulation to Pangnirtung's economy. Art flourishes in the form of carvings made from soapstone and ancient porous whalebone; the design and weaving of tapestries is another skill recently acquired by a group of local women.

Pangnirtung with the population now at 700, has become a settlement of contrasts: remote yet accessible, rooted in the traditions of its original inhabitants yet developing and modern in outlook. ♦

KINGNAIT PASS

BY J. DEWEY SOPER

In the Spring 1973 issue of The Beaver, Dr Soper, senior authority on mammals and birds of the Eastern Arctic and Alberta, told of his survey of the Pangnirtung Pass, Baffin Island in January 1925. This account describes his return to Pangnirtung by way of Kingnait Pass.

ON 21 FEBRUARY 1925, I, with Akatugak as guide, made a start for home from Kangeakdjung Point in about latitude 67° 58' N. The first leg of the trek was the 80-mile run to Merchants Bay. The dogs were well rested and fed and general prospects good. The weather was clear and sharply cold again though fortunately calm. Sundogs blazed in the sky and brilliant parheliions glowed about the sun connected by coloured intersecting arcs and vertical and horizontal bars. A sight of this kind did not appear often with such intensity. It even impressed Akatugak.

Two days later we were back at Broughton Island, without incident except for the necessity of shooting two of our dogs that had become hopelessly sick with a sort of distemper that the Eskimos called *pibloktuk*. From the natives at Broughton Island I was able to buy two dogs to take their places; they were paid for with ammunition and tobacco to the value of ten dollars apiece.

Akatugak and I stopped at the igloo of the village chief, Kowtuk; he was a big powerful native who had been involved in a shooting incident at Kivitoo several years before. Two or three Eskimos had been killed as the result of a sort of religious frenzy. This was thoroughly investigated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the spring of 1924. Kowtuk had two wives, Neuaping and Anowya, who lived together in harmony as they shared various domestic duties. This was one of the rare cases of polygamy that came to my notice in Baffin Island.

Early on 23 February we set out again in the direction of Merchants Bay. The day was very cold with a light wind, the temperature registering -40°F. Brilliant sunshine lit up the tumbled ice packs of Davis Strait and far away at sea a blackish canopy of vapour hung above the horizon — a sure indication of open water. It is in such ice-free areas that the Eskimos do much of their sealing.

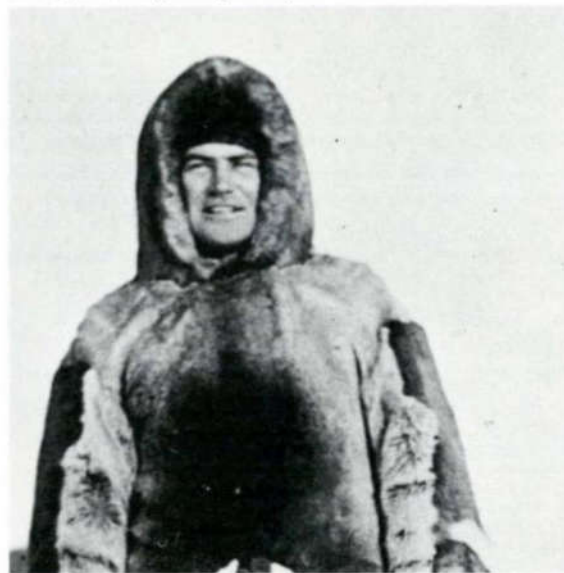
The scenery along this coast was especially arresting. Great cliffs and mountain masses rose sheer in places to heights of one or two thousand feet or more. Far inland was a magnificent cordillera of up to 7,000 feet cradling vast ice fields and glaciers. Some of the sharp, lofty peaks appeared to be those flanking Pangnirtung Pass, or situated farther north in the Penny Highlands. With the soft snow and rafted ice, progress was slow and we were obliged to camp that night a mile or so out to sea

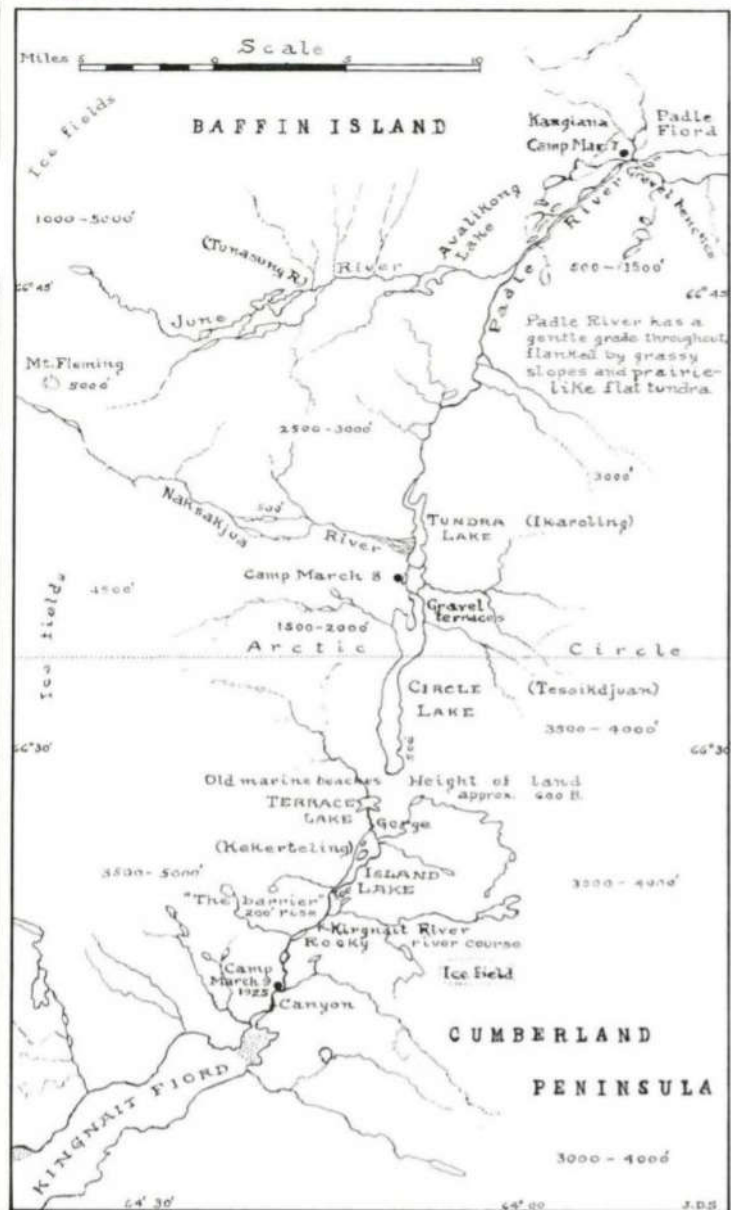
about opposite the middle section of Merchants Bay. This was brought about because in this area, at least, rugged pressure ice was much worse along the coast than farther out where there were many stretches of level floe.

During the early afternoon of 24 February, after several hours' struggle in ice pressure ridges four to six feet in height, we entered Merchants Bay where sledging improved almost at once. In this locality the notable landmark was Cape Searle. Up and down the coast it was known to the natives as Kakodluing. It resembled part of a great wall about 2,000 feet high with a sloping top like a shanty roof worn rugged by untold ages of atmospheric erosion. That night our snow-house was built at a small island about 12 miles within Merchants Bay. We had hoped to reach the native village of Padle by that time, but the earlier repeated delays in rough ice made this far from possible.

The fine weather again deserted us. The morning start was made in falling snow with a boisterous wind that kicked up unpleasant ground drift. The location of Padle was rather obscure, but old sledge tracks angling to the southeast were followed hopefully. This proved to be the right course. In late afternoon, as we rounded the southern end of Padloping Island, there in the distance,

Dr Soper at Pangnirtung during the winter 1924-25.





Kingnait Pass.

could be seen the cluster of snow-houses at Padle. It was situated on a small island near the mouth of Kangerloping Fiord.

Needless to say, we were glad to have found Padle without prolonged search; such an involvement would have been easy along a strange and intricate coastline. A warm native snow-house was a welcome retreat from the cold and wind and the village offered a chance to replenish the dog feed. The men of Padle had the reputation of being excellent hunters. Also, it was a satisfaction, now, to be within a relatively short distance of Padle Fiord and the beginning of the land crossing through Kingnait Pass. This other possible way across Cumberland Peninsula had intrigued me ever since first visiting Cumberland Sound in the autumn of 1923.

The Padle Eskimos gave us a hearty welcome with much handshaking and laughter. It was always an event of some importance when strangers arrived. We were

immediately invited to the home of the settlement chief, a big bronzed chap named Kingodlik. He had a fine buxom wife, Newwejuan and three good-looking daughters — Leeter, Judose, and Narleecungarling.

The big lodge was made of seal skins heavily banked with snow. It measured about 12 feet by 16 feet and, surprisingly enough, was furnished with a board floor. Out of the ordinary, also, was a total of four seal-oil lamps used in cooking, heating, and lighting, together with two large sleeping platforms. Altogether it was most imposing, tidy and clean.

The plan was to tarry here for two days to rest the dogs, dry out clothing, carry out various investigations, and plot the survey to date. Little did I dream then how long we would be forced to stay. On the afternoon of 27 February the temperature rose rapidly to a few degrees above zero; the sky darkened and a short time later a snowstorm struck that continued without pause for two days and nights. In the end, over two feet of fresh snow blanketed the region and the lodge was nearly buried under a huge drift.

Now travelling conditions were about as unfavourable as they could be. Movement by sledge was wholly out of the question for dogs could not possibly make any headway in the deep snow. On 1 March, against our better judgement, we made a start to the south. The result was that after four hours of floundering we were only three miles from the village. Thus beaten, we cached the dog feed and part of the equipment along the trail and returned to the settlement. A strong wind would eventually pack the snow to permit travel, but when would that come?

Now commenced a long, tedious delay waiting upon the wind. In all, we were held up at Padle for nine days. Our regular food and gasoline fuel were running low. At last I was forced to live on game and to cook over a blubber-burning kudlik. I especially wanted some of our

The Bearded or Square Flipper seal, largest of the seals taken at Merchants Bay.





A snow house used by the Soper expedition for one night. Akatugak ices the runners of the sledge for another day of travel.

pre-cooked pemmican stew, ship's biscuits, and gas held in reserve to get us through the mountains to Cumberland Sound. Luckily, the village was well stocked with seal, walrus, polar bear, and caribou meat so conditions could have been a lot worse. At least we were reasonably comfortable with plenty of meat.

After discussion with the natives on the evening of 5 March, Akatugak and I decided to make a break for it the next morning. Conditions were not yet ideal, but perceptibly improved. Kingodlik, now realizing the urgency for my return to Pangnirtung, offered his services for two days in taking part of our load and helping to break trail by alternating the lead team. His brother, Kopik, did likewise. The morning was fine and we made an early start. Snow conditions were better but still difficult. At a two-mile-an-hour crawl we passed through the narrow gap between Manitung Island and the mainland and entered Padle Fiord. The snow became steadily firmer as we drove inland. With the coming of darkness camp was made along the west side of the fiord about 16 miles from Padle. It had been a hard day on man and beast.

The following day was partly clouded, with the temperature at -22° F. By early afternoon the sledges were running over hard, old snow at a fast clip and by five o'clock the end of the fiord was reached. Then we sped up Padle River a short distance and camped for the night in the area called Kangiana. We were naturally happy to have escaped the heavy snow of the outer coast where there had been insufficient wind to harden the surface for normal travel.

Around the head of the fiord, near the mouth of Padle River, conspicuous gravel benches existed on the valley slopes that had been old marine beaches before the present emergence of the land. Similar raised beaches occur in many localities of southern Baffin Island up to several hundred feet above the sea; at a distance some have a striking resemblance to roads or railway grades snaking along the mountain sides.

Kingodlik and Kopik had come as far as they had agreed to, so now made preparations to return home. Their help had been extended as a friendly and unselfish act; no word had been said about payment of any kind. It was with deep satisfaction that I gave them all my remaining trade goods — files, ammunition, tobacco, matches, and two pocket knives which were received with undisguised pleasure. I was sincerely sorry to part with these admirable, hard-working men for they were jovial comrades along the trail and in camp. Our little party separated at 8.20 a.m. on 8 March, heading off in different directions. We were never to meet again.

At last we were now at the threshold of Kingnait Pass. This recalled to mind that evidently the first white man to make this crossing and describe it was Dr Franz Boas. He started through from Cumberland Sound on 5 May 1884, and continued on to Kivitoo and Cape Hooper. Corporal F. McInnis of the R.C.M.P. on a return trip by dog-team from Kivitoo in early April 1924, travelled the pass on his way to Kingnait Fiord and headquarters at the Pangnirtung Detachment. Sergeant J. E. F. Wight also traversed the pass in January 1925, while patrolling



J. DEWEY SOPER

The dogs travel in the Eastern Arctic fan hitch, and several times a day, Akatugak halts to clear the tangled traces.

to and from Padle, Broughton Island, and points north.

Kingnait Pass was the preferred route of the Eskimos in visiting back and forth between Cumberland Sound and Merchants Bay and elsewhere along the east coast. With large, well-fed dog-teams they usually made it through in a few days, but stormy weather with soft snow could cause substantial delays. My journey was related chiefly to the purpose of running a track survey through Kingnait Pass. This seemed called for, although it has been said that Boas, by crude methods, had made a fair sketch map of the pass 41 years earlier.

Early on 8 March thick scud obscured the sky and dismal necklaces of vapour encircled the dark crests of the mountains. About ten miles from the sea we came to the confluence of Padle and June Rivers. The latter was known to the natives as Tunasung. It appeared to have its origin in a small lake near Pangnirtung Pass. By mid-afternoon the dreary clouds passed away and the sun shone brightly with intense golden light; this caused the temperature to rise a few degrees above zero. There seemed to be a faint promise of spring in the air — so far the finest day of the year. As we toiled up the gentle slope of the Padle River we were soon bare-headed and stripped down to heavy wool shirts, for the thick caribou-skin parkas were much too warm. Needless to say, this was a delightful experience after a long period of sub-zero cold.

Just before noon a little band of 14 caribou was sighted and an hour later, five more. Ravens had become more common and vocal. The pass at this point was wide and open. The valley floor had the superficial appearance of rolling prairies with only the occasional boulder, bunchgrass and dwarf willow showing above the snow. The successive flats featured the notably meandering Padle River that gave some character to the terrain. Here and there wind-swept undulating lowlands appeared to be well clothed with old vegetation. While the flanking mountains rose to 2,000 feet, or more, they were modest as compared with the grandeur of the lofty giants in the ranges far to the west.

In mid-afternoon when about 16 miles up the river we were suddenly confronted by a band of 70 caribou that had been feeding on a grassy bench above the river. The dogs became excited at the sight and smell of the animals at such close range. Caribou are curious. Despite the din and confusion they milled about for some time, ran off about 60 to 100 yards and then turned about to gaze intently in our direction. The dogs were so wild with excitement that it was difficult to prevent a runaway, but we finally got the sledge securely anchored to a large boulder.

It was easily seen that Akatugak itched to take an animal and this he did without trouble in a few minutes. This provided fresh meat for ourselves and the dogs



The winter home of an Eskimo family on the Cumberland Peninsula, March 1925.

and I secured a good March caribou specimen for the National Museum in Ottawa. With both of us measuring, skinning, and cutting up, the carcass was packed on the sledge in about an hour and we were again heading up the pass. During the remainder of the afternoon we saw several more small bands of caribou, thus plainly showing that they were now common in this particular area.

Tundra Lake was reached just before dark at a distance of about 18 air miles from Padle Fiord. The ascent of the river and flats to this point was easy and pleasant with a gradient of around 17 feet to the mile. The lake was four miles in length with a long, narrow bay at the northwest extremity. The Eskimo name for the lake was Ikaroling. Opposite the lake to the west was a gap in the mountains through which the little Naksajua River flows to Tundra Lake. Through this gap one had a fine view of the magnificent peaks and ice fields in the Pangnirtung Pass region through which we had travelled a month earlier. The distance from Tundra Lake to Pangnirtung Pass was about 25 miles.

The mountains of the Kingnait Pass and Fiord region were much less imposing than those of the latter area. They were lower, more gently moulded, while forbidding ice fields, glaciers, and rugged moraines were almost totally lacking. No glaciers reached Kingnait Pass proper, and ice fields were many miles away. By the

light of the moon camp was made beside the short stream that connected Tundra and Circle Lakes. A cold, penetrating wind had sprung up and the interior of the snow-house was a welcome retreat.

On the morning of 9 March a blistering gale began to blow as we pushed southward over the seven-mile length of Circle Lake. The force of the wind bent us nearly double and the dogs became almost unmanageable. Sometimes on patches of glare ice the sledge was blown about in semi-circles. I proposed the name of this lake to the Geographic Board of Canada because of the fact that the Arctic Circle crossed it near the middle.

The south end of the lake was reached at noon; here we rested for a time in the lee of some rocks while we indulged in hot tea, hardtack, butter, and jam and had a smoke. The halt was a definite benefit to men and dogs. A cold, high wind takes a lot out of arctic travellers. Kingnait Pass had a reputation for strong winds, as did Pangnirtung Pass, but I was under the impression that they were less frequent and less powerful here than in the latter district.

The lake occupied a valley about a mile wide and within a mile or two on either hand the mountains gradually reached altitudes of up to 4,500 feet; however, 2,500 to 3,000 feet was about average over most of the district. Width of the valley north to Padle Fiord varied from about two-thirds of a mile to one and one-half

miles. The total slope from Padle Fiord to the north end of Circle Lake averaged about 18 feet per mile. This section of the inter-mountain route could scarcely be more favourable.

Immediately south of Circle Lake was a rocky ridge nearly 200 feet high that was approximately 600 feet above sea-level. It totally obstructed the valley and constituted the height of land between north and south drainages of Kingnait Pass. As there was an abundance of snow, with moderate slopes, comparatively little difficulty was experienced in getting up and over. Nevertheless, many rests were needed, together with repeated hauling on the lash ropes to assist the dogs.

A little tarn in the recess of the hills (which I named Terrace Lake) lay close to the south. A small stream entering it from the northwest was the beginning of Kingnait River that flowed to Kingnait Fiord. This tarn was mostly very shallow since we could see numerous sedges protruding above the ice even well out from shore. On the southwest side of it were a number of perfect old marine beaches; they lay one above the other to several hundred feet above sea-level.

The river discharged from the south end of this lakelet to pass through a picturesque gorge of granites and gneisses about a mile long; rocks in the river-bed were often troublesome. We then entered Island Lake (Kekerteling). It was about three miles long, attractively situated and distinguished by having a fair-sized island near its middle with a smaller one to the north.

The terrain suddenly fell away near the south end over a granite ridge with a rather spectacular descent in two parts, around 200 feet in all. This I referred to on my track survey as 'The Barrier' since in travelling from

the south this was a very tough slope to surmount. For part of the descent we were obliged to cut steps in the hard snow and, unhitching the dogs, let the loaded sledge down with hand lines and rawhide drags on the runners.

The course now lay down an astonishing river-bed bristling with large boulders and smaller rocks. Part of this lay in a relatively shallow gorge called Torgnatelling. The channel was so rock-glutted in places that we were forced to take the sledge laboriously right across the naked tops of the flatter rocks. This was notably hard on the dogs and no less so on us, pulling on lines. This lasted off and on for a couple of miles. Frequent rests were demanded and a couple of mug-ups helped. Even at -20°F we perspired as in summer despite the removal of our caribou-skin parkas. Consuming thirst was only partially satisfied by eating ice.

At one time we had thought it possible to reach the sea at the head of Kingnait Fiord that night, but the handicaps and delays were much too great. Darkness fell, the moon rose and still we were fighting our way along that malevolent river valley. It was no use trying to go farther, so we searched for suitable snow (which we found another mile downstream) to build a house. The 11 hours of almost continuous effort, topped by the route through the Torgnatelling gorge was virtually too much for one day — stress and labour over-done.

By nine o'clock in the evening the lodge was completed, the dogs fed and supper disposed of; now there was no greater blessing than a retreat to the sleeping bag for a night's rest. What with damp clothes and fatigue I tossed about for some time before sleep finally came. The snow blocks of this house were charged with fine sand. With the warmth of the seal-oil lamp for drying clothes, the sand kept softly sifting down all night long to spread over everything. By morning the interior was in a wretched state. However, we succeeded in keeping the sand out of our breakfast and later it was easily beaten off the outfit when we broke camp on the morning of 10 March.

Without our realizing it the night before, Akatugak and I had nearly reached the end of the adverse river travel. With an early start we were soon speeding away over the smooth, downgrade ice of the stream. This pleasant circumstance persisted nearly all the way to the sea which was reached at 10 a.m. But there was one more obstacle; the last few hundred yards of the river channel lies in a deep, narrow and gloomy canyon where the tides bore in for most of its length. Consequently, the canyon was studded with broken chunks of sea ice interspersed with small pools of salt water. At 11 o'clock we finally reached the level surface of Kingnait Fiord where the tribulations of land travel were left behind. The achievement was celebrated with a welcome lunch behind a shelter of snow blocks.

Although the southern part of the Kingnait Pass route has definite handicaps, we made the entire crossing of

The dogs at rest while traces are disentangled and the load on the sledge is adjusted and re-lashed.



J. DEWEY SOPER



The Hudson's Bay building at Pangnirtung, February 1925. The snow blocks are insulation against wind and low temperatures.

Cumberland Peninsula in two and a half days. Akatugak told me that travelling conditions were sometimes worse and it took longer for the crossing. How much so, can be comprehended from the fact that Boas, in early May 1884, was 11 days covering the same distance through Kingnait Pass, but in the opposite direction.

This was an infinitely easier way across Cumberland Peninsula than by the formidable Pangnirtung Pass. As previously mentioned, the gradient on the north slope of Kingnait Pass, from Padle Fiord to Circle Lake, was an easy 18 feet per mile while the south slope from the height of land to Kingnait Fiord averaged about 30 feet to the mile. In our case only the one day presented unusual impediments in the southern sector.

Upon reaching Kingnait Fiord the sledge was unloaded and the steel runners treated with warm water that froze almost instantly. An earlier application of seal-blood and water had been completely worn off in travelling over rocks. The day was now cloudy and calm and the mountain scenery superb. On the hard-packed surface of the fiord progress seemed almost effortless after the experience of trekking down Kingnait River.

A few miles from the head of the fiord a white fox was seen racing to the east — the first that came to our notice on the whole trip; this was not surprising as the animals were mostly nocturnal in habit. Akatugak sent

several bullets after him without visible effect except to increase his speed into the adjacent mountains. Following the meeting with caribou along Padle River and Tundra Lake the only wildlife in evidence was an occasional Arctic hare, or raven and scarce trails of lemming, fox, and weasel. On this occasion far more caribou resorted to the northern grassy section of Kingnait Pass than anywhere in Pangnirtung Pass.

Having reached Cumberland Sound we found sledging conditions ideal which put the dogs in good fettle. By a forced march of 11 hours the first day and 12 hours the next, we covered the intervening 90 miles to Pangnirtung by 8.30 on the evening of 11 March 1925. The whole journey required 34 days for a total distance of over 500 miles. Unavoidable delays in arctic sledge journeys usually prolong them well beyond the theoretical time required for a given mileage. Blizzards and deep, fresh snow present the customary obstacles and frustrations.

The salutary effects of getting back from a winter trip of this kind may be left to the imagination. They include such pleasures as meeting old friends, a hot bath, clean clothes, better meals, and the sheer luxury of being in a warm house. Strangely enough, after indulging for a time in easy living, one is quite ready to hit the wilderness trails again regardless of privations. This may be regarded as one of the curiosities of arctic life and exploration. ♦

'OLD HOUSE' AT ALBANY

BY W. A. KENYON

Dr Kenyon, Associate Curator of Ontario Archaeology at the Royal Ontario Museum, first explored the site of the 'Old House' on Fishing Creek in 1960. Since then he has returned to Albany with four archaeological expeditions, the most recent being in the summer of 1970.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to quote from their Archives.

THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO on 16 July 1674, Charles Bayly, the bayside governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, left the new post near the mouth of the Moose River to sail to Albany 'where no Englishman had been before'. He promised the Indians there that he would return to trade with them the following year, and being a pious Quaker he no doubt kept his promise, though history fails to verify this point. On his return to England in 1679, Bayly reported to the committee that he had established 'a house of some strength' at Albany, or Chichewan as it was then called, and had left John Bridgar in charge.

It is significant, I believe, that Bayly referred to the establishment at Albany as a 'house', rather than a 'post' or 'fort', for we find that Louis Jolliet used the same term when he was describing the posts on James Bay. Jolliet had come overland, by way of Lake Mistassini, to report on the activities of the English in the summer of

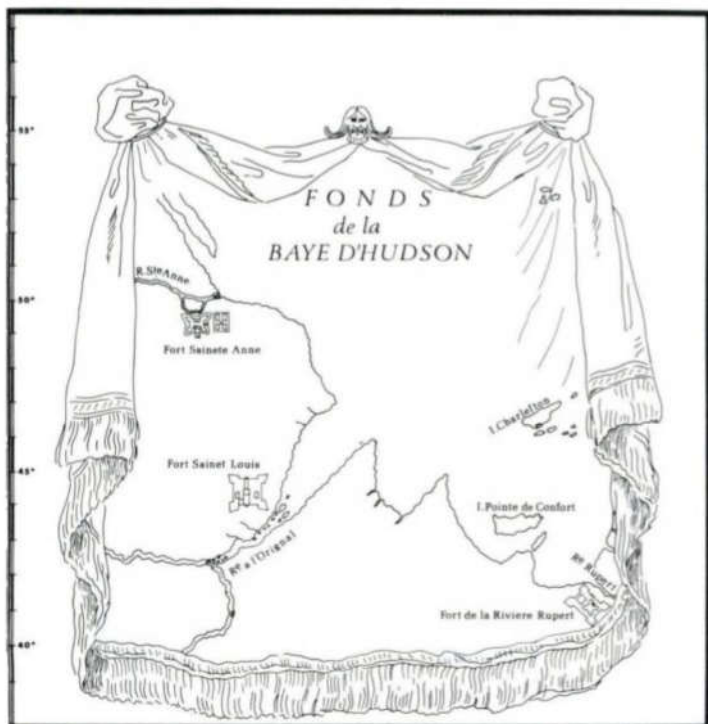
1679. On his return to Canada in the fall, he advised the French authorities that the English were 'kindly, unsuspecting and apathetic, so that the French knowledge of the woods and of the Indians placed it within their power to stifle the English trade whenever they wished.' He continued 'The forts at present have but the name of Fort. They are small squares of pickets which enclose their houses.' The establishment at Albany, then, could not have been built earlier than 1675, and was already operating in 1679 when Bayly returned to England. A letter from the committee, dated at London, 21 May 1680, suggests very strongly that it was built between the arrival of Bridgar in the bay on 22 August 1678, and the departure of Bayly the following summer. Addressed to John Bridgar, the letter states that 'Wee have yours of the 21th September from Port [Point] Comfort, and are well pleased to understand that you have assisted in beginning a trade at the River of Chichichiwan'.

John Nixon, who succeeded Bayly as bayside governor, mentioned to the London Governor and committee in his report of 1682 that he had 'the fort at Chechechewan to looke after, which was not in Mr. Baylys tyme'. His use of the word 'fort' may or may not indicate a structural change in the establishment at Albany, but it does support the view that the 'house of some strength' was built by John Bridgar who probably started work on it in the fall of 1678.

In sorting out the architectural history of Albany, a major clue is provided in the list of materials that were delivered to that post in 1684 by Leonard Edgcomb, master of the *John and Thomas*. This material was consigned to Henry Sergeant who had replaced Nixon as governor at 'the bottom of the bay' the previous year. Most of the shipment consisted of supplies for the men, and trade goods that would be bartered for furs. As usual, the outfit contained a full year's supply of materials, most of which were carefully packed in barrels, chests, and bales, each of which was identified by a number, and the 'marke as in the margent'. In addition to the usual outfit, however, enough building material was included in the shipment to indicate that a major renovation was planned. The invoice lists a wide assortment of carpenter's tools, as well as 9,800 English and Flemish bricks, 2,000 10-inch tiles, 500 pounds of spikes, and 11,000 nails in six different sizes.

The renovation or expansion of the Albany post probably resulted from the fact that the new governor was accompanied by the most extensive entourage that

Pierre Allemand of the de Troyes expedition drew the original of this map showing the three forts captured by the French: Fort Sainete Anne (Albany), Fort Sainet Louis (Moose) and Fort de la Riviere Rupert (Rupert River).



ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM FROM PAC MAP

had ever been seen in the bay. In addition to his wife and his wife's companion, a Mrs Maurice, Governor Sergeant had with him his son, a manservant, and Mr John French, M.A., the first clergyman that the Company sent out to the bay. Sergeant had been instructed to set up his 'owne chiefe residence at the Factory of Chychewan River that being the place of the greatest Trade and resort of the Indians' but for some reason he failed to carry out his instructions. In all probability, Governor Sergeant simply found that the facilities at Albany were inadequate when he arrived there in 1683, so he ordered the tools and building material that he would need to rebuild the post, and then retired to Moose Factory where he spent the winter. The committee in London apparently accepted his explanation, for they did send the tools and building materials, but they made it clear that they still wanted him to carry out his original instructions, and he was to 'omit not to doe it the next winter'.

The first actual description of the Company forts on James Bay is that of de Troyes who led an overland party from Canada in 1686, and captured the posts at Moose, Rupert, and Albany. In his journal, published in English in 'The Battle for James Bay' by Kenyon and Turnbull, Macmillan of Canada, 1971, de Troyes says that Albany:

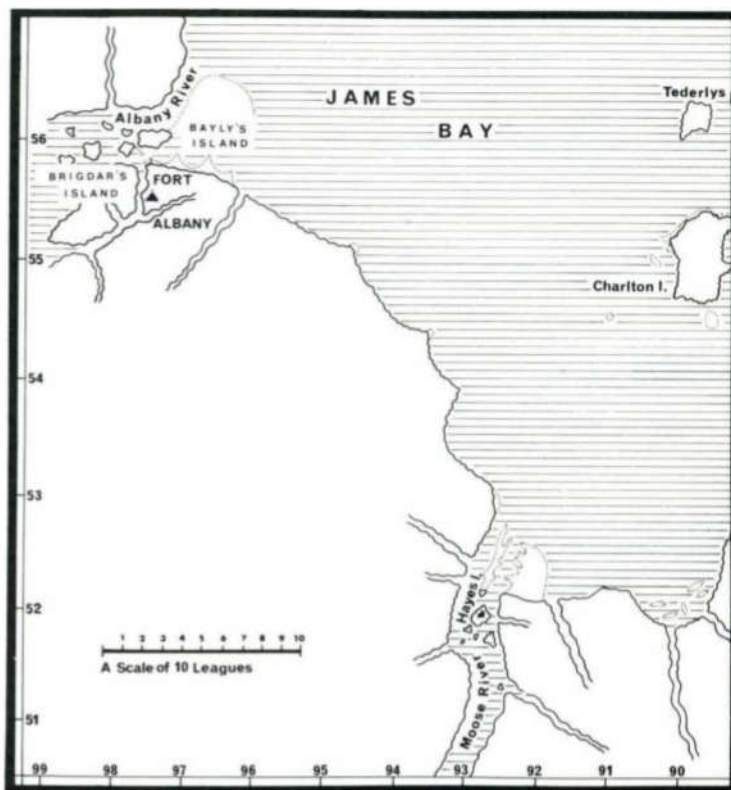
... was located in the elbow of an arm of the river, with a very good field of observation. ... Here is how it is built. There is a large main building constructed of horizontal logs which forms the major part of the curtain which faces the river. This is the servants' quarters, having at each end a score of stakes which make up the curtain at each side, and join the building to the bastions with which it is flanked. The side which faces the woods is built in the same way. There, the large building serves both as the dwelling of the governor and as a warehouse. The ground floors of the bastions on this side of the fort are also used for storage.

The other two curtains are composed of thick stakes strongly joined together, and capped by a plank garnished with iron points, as are all those which surround the place. ... The four bastions with which the fort is defended are of horizontal logs. ...

There you have a description of the site and the construction of the fort. It is about forty feet from the river, surrounded by old ditches almost filled up, which contain water only in some places.

One of the officers in de Troyes's detachment, Pierre Allemand, the quartermaster, published a map of the bottom of the bay in 1687, showing the location of the three forts that they captured, as well as the depot on Charlton Island. If, instead of showing someone where the fort at Albany was located on Allemand's map, we wanted to tell them how to get there, the directions would be quite simple: follow the south bank of the Albany river westward from James Bay. With these directions, incidentally, you would arrive at the same place if you used any detailed map of the area, such as John Thornton's map of 1685, Samuel Hearne's map of 1774, or a modern topographic map.

During the excavation of the Fishing Creek site it became increasingly obvious that the fort we were

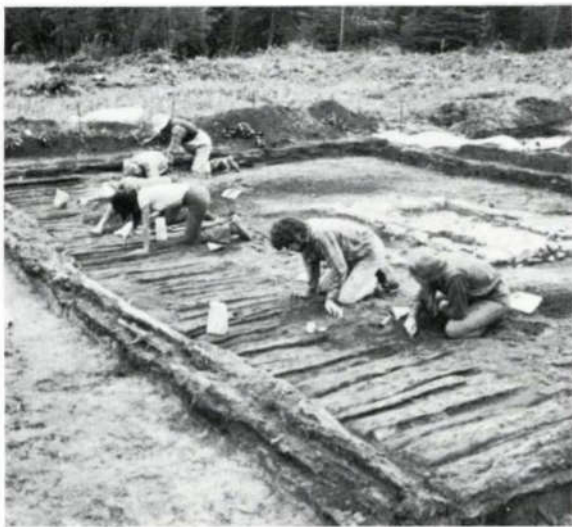


A copy of John Thornton's map of 1685. Bayly's Island is now Albany Island, Bridgar's Island is Anderson Island.

digging up and mapping, and the fort that de Troyes had described in his journal were one and the same thing. It became fairly evident also, that Governor Sergeant who surrendered the post to de Troyes on 26 July 1686, had probably built it with the tools and materials that had been sent there three years earlier. Meanwhile, we had assumed that the earlier post — Bayly's 'house of some strength' — had been built not at the Fishing Creek site, but on Albany Island, or Bayly's Island, as it was then called. This assumption had been based on statements made by E. E. Rich in *Hudson's Bay Company 1670 - 1870*, and by Arthur S. Morton in his *History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, even though I could find no reference in support of these statements.

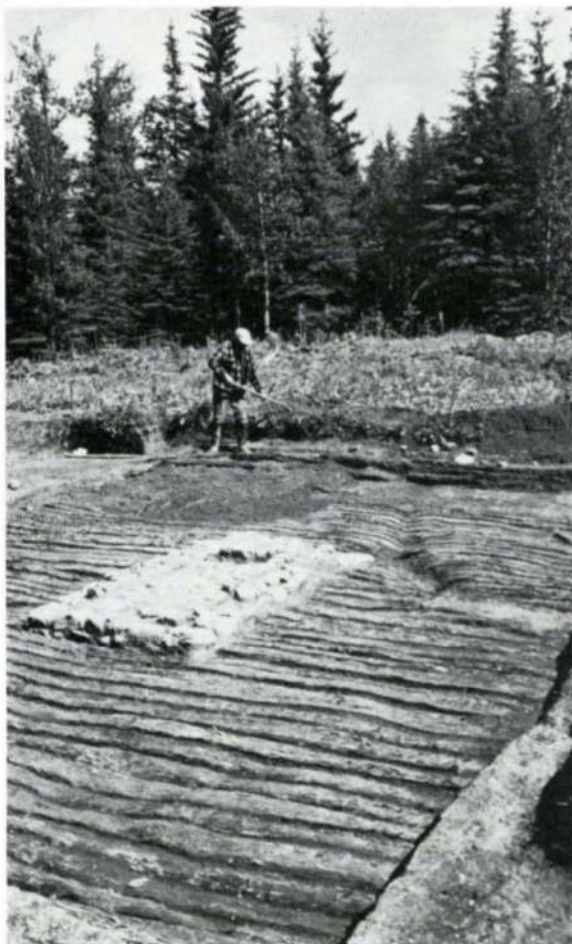
When I returned to the Fishing Creek site to tie down a few loose ends in the summer of 1970, I was astonished to find the floor of an earlier structure buried beneath the centre of the fort that I had worked on for so many years. This earlier structure was a single rectangular log building measuring 23 x 33 feet located precisely in the centre of the quadrangle that was defined by the four bastions. Like the later buildings above it, this earlier structure was built of timbers that were probably squared, or at least flattened on both the upper and lower surfaces; the corners were half-lapped, and pinned with heavy, wrought-iron spikes. A rectangle

Excavation work is done during the summer of 1970 on the 'house of some strength' built in 1678-79 probably by John Bridgar.



PHOTOS: W. A. KENYON

The floor of small poles and the central base for a brick or tile stove is uncovered.



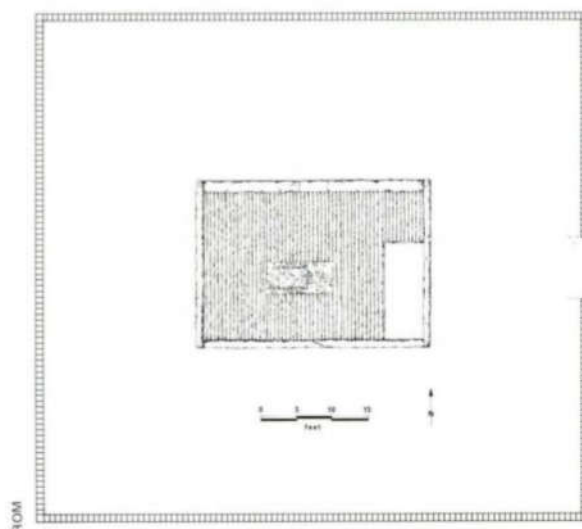
of flat stones near the centre of the house was probably the base of a brick or tile stove. The floor, except for the southeast corner, was paved with 58 slender logs or poles with an average diameter of seven inches; most of these had simply been left in the round, although in a few places, the upper surfaces had been adzed flat. It must have been an extremely lumpy surface to walk on, but the grooves between the logs made excellent archaeological traps for small objects that were dropped by the inhabitants.

In an attempt to sort out the building sequence at the Fishing Creek site, a narrow trench was cut across the site from the north moat to the south moat. This trench exposed the old occupation floor at the same level as the newly discovered house. And this was the same level on which the four bastions or flankers had been constructed. I had often wondered why the flankers had been set in the ground a foot to a foot and a half lower than the central courtyard on which the body of the fort was built. Now I had the answer. The flankers had been built to protect a single house, the one I had just uncovered. The two large buildings at the upper level — the ones that de Troyes captured in 1686 — were built later than

A bottle in situ of the floor logs.



The Albany house of 1678 with a palisade only.



the flankers and after the original house had been dismantled. During the alterations, fill was carried in to raise the entire quadrangle, probably to provide a drier and more stable footing for the enlarged establishment. Towards the north end of our test-trench, too, we found a line of posts set upright in the ground, and crossing our trench at right angles. Only the stubs remained, as they had been broken off, or rotted through, at the original ground surface.

The architectural history of the establishment at Albany can now be outlined as follows. First, a 'house of some strength' was built on the south shore, opposite Anderson Island. This island, incidentally, was named Bridgars Island on our first detailed map of the mouth of the river, John Thornton's map of 1685. The house was simply a rude, rectangular structure surrounded by a picket fence or palisade such as Jolliet had described after his visit to Rupert in 1679. This was probably built by John Bridgar in the fall of 1678 and the summer of 1679 before Governor Bayly's return to England. By the fall of 1682, the four bastions (or at least some of them) had been added if we are to believe John Nixon, who had replaced Charles Bayly as governor in 1679. In his report of that year, Nixon pointed out that among his other problems, he had 'the fort at Chechechewan to looke after, which was not in Mr. Baylys tyme'. Then, in 1683, Governor Sergeant arrived with his entourage, his 'parcel of women' as they were called later, and his orders to establish his 'owne chiefe residence at the Factorey of Chychewan River'. When he saw how inadequate the facilities really were at Albany, however, he apparently decided to ignore the Company's orders. He repaired to Moose Factory, and ordered the materials and tools that he would need to renovate and enlarge the living quarters at Albany: as we have seen, these were delivered aboard the *John and Thomas* the following year. The final phase of building at the Fishing Creek

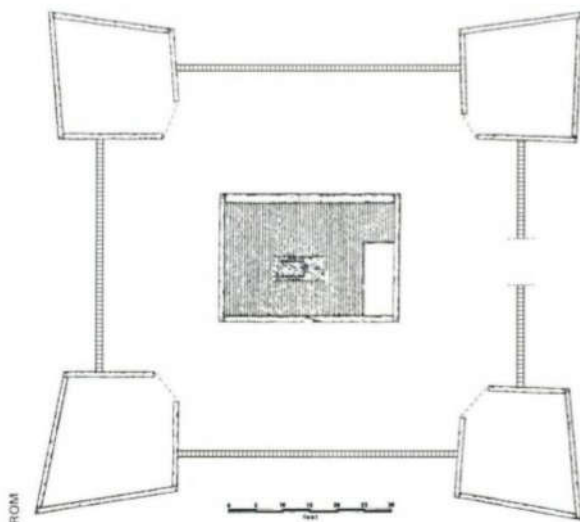
site then, would have occurred in the fall of 1684 and the summer of 1685.

There were certainly outbuildings at the Fishing Creek site, for the Albany journals which begin in 1705, make numerous references to the herds of sheep and cattle that were kept there. Both archaeological and archival evidence agree, however, that the architectural history of the fort itself is very close to what has been outlined above.

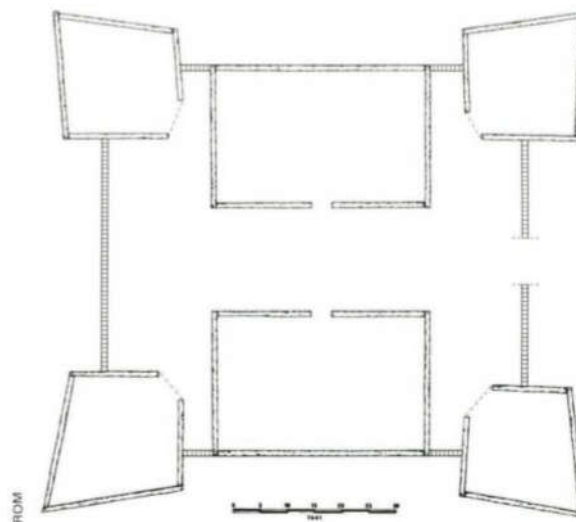
Governor Sergeant surrendered his fort to de Troyes on 26 July 1686. The French then occupied the post until it was recaptured by James Knight of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1693. In spite of the fact that Fishing Creek was a difficult channel to navigate, the English remained there till they moved to Bayly's Island, the present Albany Island in 1720 or 1721. It was Thomas McCliesh, the last governor to occupy the fort on Fishing Creek, who arranged and carried out the move to Albany Island. A letter which he wrote to the committee in London, dated at Fort Albany on 31st August 1719 said: 'As concerning the building of a new factory at Bayly Island, God willing we shall begin as soon as I have sent the vessel to the East Main, with goods to supply those Indians'. Three years later, the job was done, for Joseph Myatt wrote to the committee in London that 'Your factory is now completed and in a good posture of defence'. And so the 'house of some strength' was abandoned. It was raided a few times when the blacksmith at the Albany Island post needed iron, and sent some men to the abandoned fort to gather up used spikes and nails. It appears, finally, on the *Plan of Albany River* a chart drawn by Samuel Hearne in 1774, where it is called the *Old Factory*. And then it was forgotten.

On Friday, 9 March 1973, I wandered into Beaver House in London to pay my respects to the Honourable

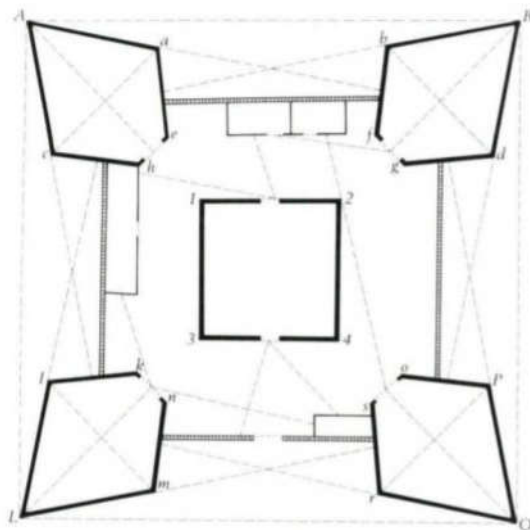
Four bastions were added to the house by the fall of 1682.



The house, as renovated by Henry Sergeant in 1684.



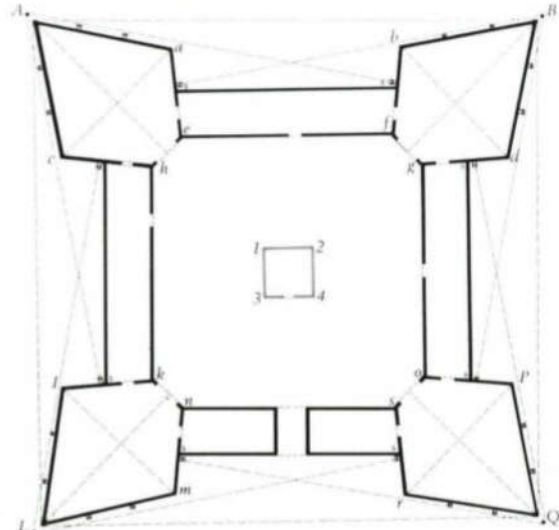
A Draught or Plan of the old Fort at Albany



A Scale of Feet for these two Draughts or Plan's.

Plan of the fort laid out by McCliesh on Albany Island, 1719.
(Drawings are from document G 1/75 in the H B C Archives.)

A Draught or Plan of the Same with alterations



A Scale of Feet for these two Draughts or Plan's.

Alterations to the Fort on Albany Island, as suggested by the
Committee in 1733.

Company. While chatting with Mrs Joan Craig, the archivist, I asked rather idly if they had any old sketches or plans of the Albany post lying about. To my astonishment, she produced a sheet of vellum measuring 24½" x 28¼", on which were drawn the ground-plans of two forts. The one of the left is entitled 'A Draught or Plan of the old Fort at Albany'; the one of the right, 'A Draught or Plan of the Same with Alterations'. The document, H B C Arch., G. 1/75, is listed in the company records as 'A Plan of Albany Fort and a design for a New one no date or name' in the 'Inventory of Books &c' which was compiled by John Brome of the Company's London staff in 1796. The panel below the draught of the old fort reads:

There are some certain maxims established according to which, when a Fortification is raised, there can be but little said against its Advantages to those $\frac{1}{y}$ are within, as you may easily examine it your self by the following observations.

All the ports which are to enclose a space of ground, ought to be Flanked that is to say, viewed on every Side that so there may be no shelter about the place where the enemy may lodge him self, but what may be Discovered by those within, not only from the front but from the sides, and even from behind if it be possible. Whatsoever encloses a fortification, must have Flank, faces & Curtain thats built after such a manner as in the Plans a bove, and that the Discharges of the Musketts may not be able to pierce its thickness.

It is requisite all the men and officers in the Fort Should allways lodge in the Flankers one half in one and one half in its opposite then they will be allway in their quarters, have a Communication from flank to flank under cover one man with in is as good as 40 now, for the enemy now, can as easily be masters of their flankers as they them selfs.

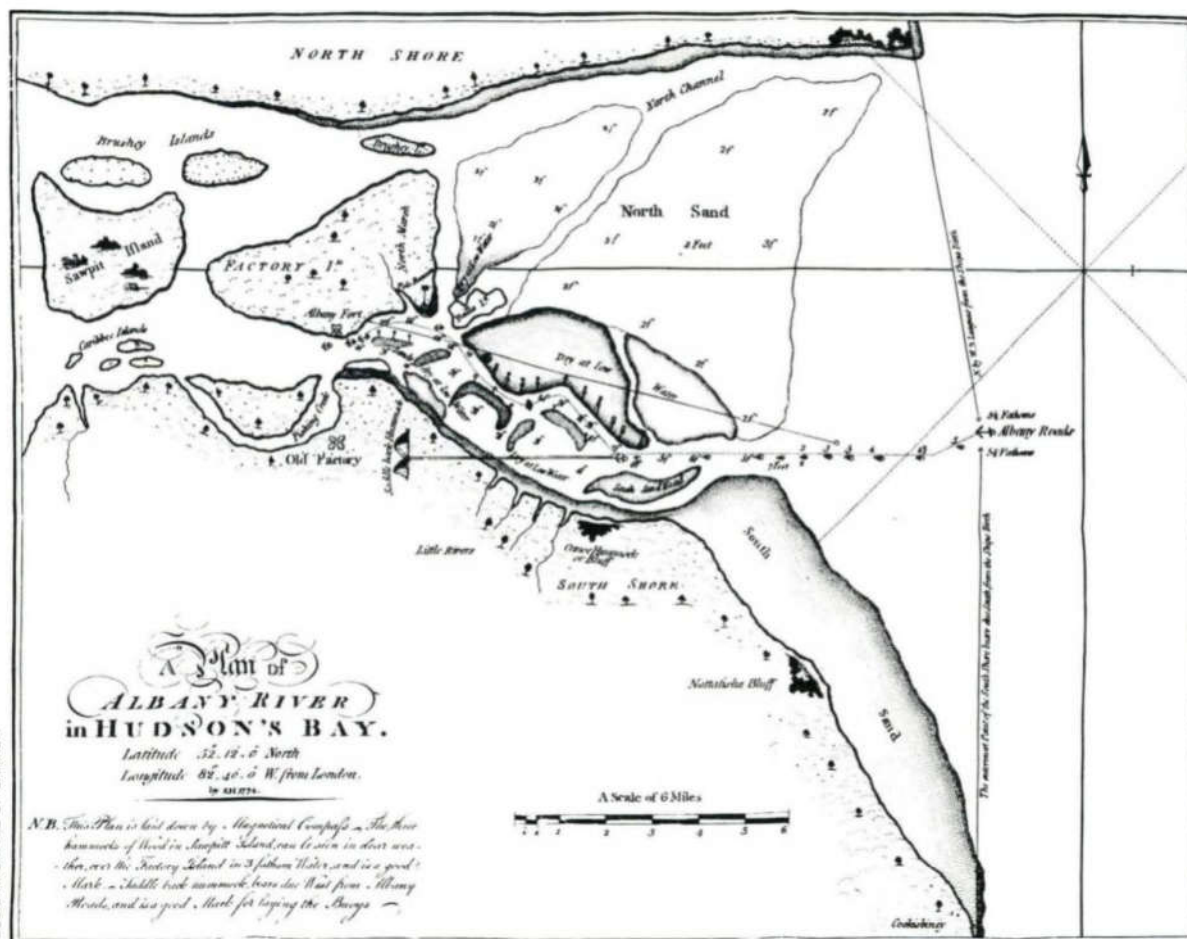
The panel below 'the Same with Alterations' reads:

The Exterior side AB, or AI or BQ or LQ = to	F.
The Face Aa, or Ac or Bb or Bd & c, all = to	108
	30

The Flank ch or ac or bf or nm or sr = to	19.1/2
The Curtain ss or ns the Exterioir part =	47-
The Line of Defence ms or vs & c = to	79
The Gorge kn or so or he or fg = to	9.2
The Square 1.2,3,4, in $\frac{c}{y}$ Body of $\frac{c}{y}$	
Fort for Powder = to	10. sq.
The Height of the Bastions are now	16
The Height of $\frac{c}{y}$ Courtains to be	16
The Height of $\frac{c}{y}$ Parapet all round to be = to	5
The Powder House to be 10 foot Heigh Cased & the Top archd with Bricks	

When I first saw the old plan, I was struck with the similarity between it and what I was calling 'phase 2' at the Fishing Creek site, the 'house of some strength' surrounded by the four flankers and the connecting curtain-walls. A more detailed comparison was only possible after my return to Toronto, however, and then it became obvious that the plans could not pertain to the site that I had excavated on the south shore. It must of necessity, then, be related to some later activity that had occurred on Albany Island. I knew almost nothing about that phase of Albany's history, but on the off chance that I might have inadvertently tucked away some relevant passage, I opened the 'odds and ends' folder that was filed away with my notes on Albany. While I was looking through my notes, I also discussed the problem with an old friend and colleague, Mr George Thorman of St Thomas, Ontario. He kindly referred me to the Journal kept by Thomas McCliesh at Fort Albany in 1719, where I found the following entry dated October 5th:

'This morning I went to Baileys Island and set off the foundation of the new Fort which is 106 foot Square. The Dwelling house to stand in the Middle, being 30



Samuel Hearne's map of 1774, showing both the 'Old Factory' on Fishing Creek and Albany Fort on Albany (Factory) Island.

Foot Square, & the long Sides of each Bastion 30 foot long.'

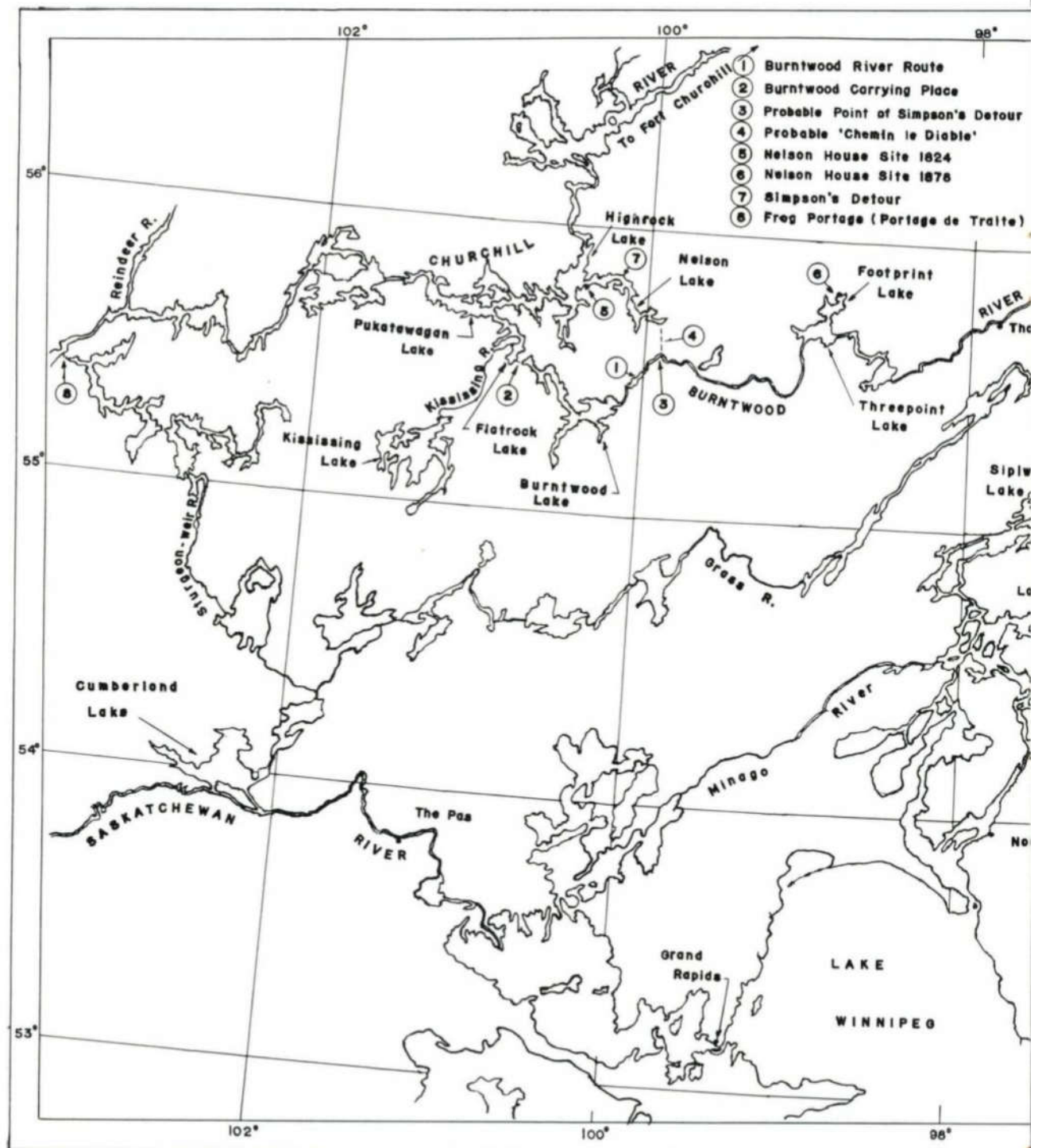
Then, among my own notes, I found a reference to the following letter from the governor and committee in London to Joseph Adams and the council at Albany fort. Written on 10 May 1733, the letter states:

Wee having Resolved to make some alterations in Your Factory have had a Plan laid before Us for that purpose, by which instead of having the men lodged in the middle of the Court in the Factory as they are at present, the Building will be so alter'd . . . That the men may all be lodg'd in the Flankers, and a new powder Room be built where the House now Stands. . . We Intend by ^c Alterations both by making of it more defencible & Commodious . . . Wee do also Order that You & he [Capt. Middleton] do review all the works of the Factory . . . and if it shall be judg'd necessary by you, that any alteration be made, Wee expressly Order that such Alteration be Enter'd in the Council book with all the particulars.

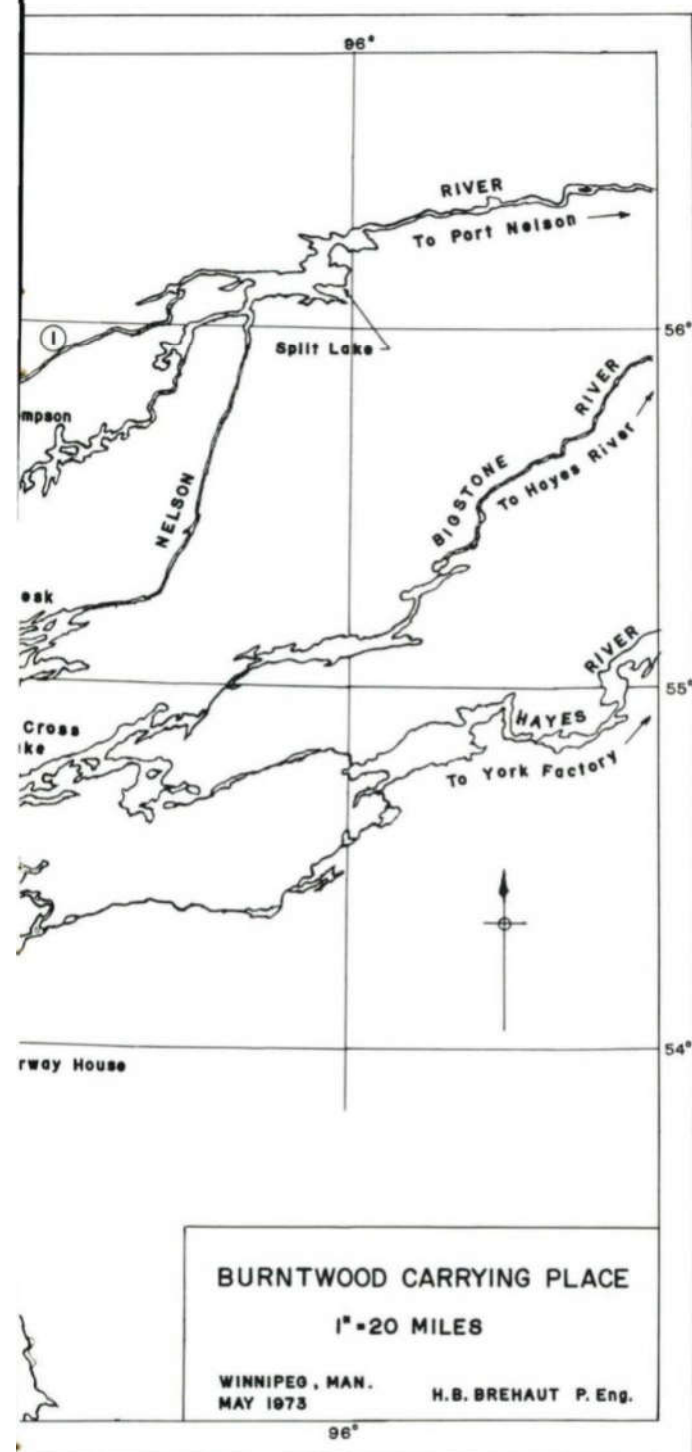
The problem, and its solution is the same on the 'Draught or Plan' as it is in the letter — to move the men from an isolated house in the courtyard into the flankers, and then replace the dwelling house by a powder magazine. The similarities between the two documents are sufficiently detailed, in my opinion, to suggest that the 'Draught or Plan', No. G.1/75, is the actual docu-

ment that was referred to in the letter of 10 May 1733. And the 'old Fort' on the 'Draught or Plan' is identical with the fort that McCliesh laid out on Bailey's Island, apart from a two-foot discrepancy in its overall dimensions. It would appear, therefore, that the 'old Fort' on the 'Draught or Plan' is a drawing of the fort that McCliesh laid out on Albany Island in 1719. In all probability, the plan was drawn by Captain Christopher Middleton, for 'When the Committee decided to build a post at Moose in 1730 it was Middleton who was entrusted with the plans and the surveying of a site. He was also called upon to help 're-design and fortify the post at Albany.' It was Middleton, too, who brought the instructions from the Committee to the bay in 1733 aboard the *Hudson's Bay*, and returned to London the same year with the reply from Adams. The reply reads as follows:

. . . I have cut down and squared a good quantity of timber ready for the repairing of our factory and shall get it home with the utmost expedition from the woods . . . I have in conjunction with Captain Middleton . . . reviewed all our work about the factory and have agreed upon the plan that you sent over to be followed without any alteration and do fully believe it will completely answer all the good purposes thereby intended, and shall proceed on the work with the utmost expedition. . . ♦



The Burntwood Carrying Place



By H. B. BREHAUT

The author is a retired professional engineer who has done much original research on the Red River cart and the fur-trade routes.

THE BURNTWOOD RIVER ROUTE was known to the Indians in the early days of the fur trade, and they passed their information on to the fur traders as they moved inland. It was not, however, until the Hudson's Bay Company was strenuously seeking a shorter route from the posts of Churchill and York Factory on Hudson Bay to Athabasca territory, that the route received close attention.

When George Simpson arrived on the scene in 1820 he quickly became acquainted with the problems of the fur trade. This route appeared to him to have definite advantages but there was not unanimity as to its merits.

The Hudson's Bay Company first entered what is now western Canada by tidewater at Port Nelson on Hudson Bay and established trading posts at river estuaries along its shores. By contrast its rival, which after a series of reorganizations finally became known as the North West Company, came into the territory at Grand Portage, about thirty-eight miles southwest of Fort William (now Thunder Bay) on Lake Superior. They penetrated inland, establishing posts and routes as far west as the Athabasca region.

This placed the Hudson's Bay Company at a competitive disadvantage, for it expected the Indians to bring their pelts to the posts on tidewater. The Nor' Westers in contrast were close to the trapping areas, allowing the Indians to avoid long arduous trips to York Factory and Fort Churchill. The main routes of the Nor' Westers lay across the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, which also permitted them to intercept and relieve, by persuasion or force, the Indians of furs destined for the Hudson's Bay Company's posts. The Company endeavoured to cope with this by inland trading expeditions, but eventually was obliged to meet its rivals' tactics by adopting a policy of building inland houses at strategic locations.

The Hudson's Bay Company's main route was established with the building of Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River in 1774. This was the Company's first inland post on the prairies. The route ran to the interior from York Factory up the Hayes River to Lake Winnipeg and Grand Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan, then west on the North Saskatchewan River to Edmonton House, built in 1795. The other main route turned south from Norway House along Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Red River, and up that river to its confluence with the Assiniboine River, the site of the present City of Winnipeg.

Until about 1801 when the inland headquarters of the North West Company were moved to Fort William, the main route of the Nor' Westers ran from Grand Portage along the Pigeon River and Rainy Lake, through Lake of the Woods and down the Winnipeg River to Bas-de-la-Rivière at the south end of Lake Winnipeg. It proceeded north on Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids and up the Saskatchewan River to Cumberland Lake. From there it turned north along the Sturgeon-weir River to Portage de Traite (Frog Portage), over to the Churchill

River, then continued west through Lac Ile-à-la-Croix by way of the Methye Portage to Lake Athabasca. Their other main route ran from Bas-de-la-Rivière across the southern end of Lake Winnipeg to the Red River and the Assiniboine.

When the great fur wealth of the Athabasca became fully realized, the Hudson's Bay Company also used the Sturgeon-weir — Churchill route to Lake Athabasca. Thus the two rivals shared common stretches of their two main routes. The direct confrontation between the employees of the companies was more serious than the interception of the Indians and their furs. The result was a bitter and internecine struggle involving plunder and violence that continued until the amalgamation of the companies in 1821.

Under such destructive competition each company grasped every opportunity to gain any possible advantage. Nothing was overlooked: the type of transport, the supply depots, the pemmican requirements, the logistics of the movement of furs and goods, the seasonable effect of climate, and the economics of the operation. These were all evaluated and an outstanding system of transportation was organized. Notwithstanding these measures the Hudson's Bay Company was far from satisfied with their route to the Athabasca. They sought a shorter alternative route.

On and off over a period extending upwards of half a century the Hudson's Bay Company explored, most, if not all, of the water courses that promised hope of suitable transport. Rivers flowing into Hudson Bay in the vicinity of York Factory and Fort Churchill and even as far north as Chesterfield Inlet were investigated in search of a satisfactory route. The Beaver River route to Atha-

basca River was tried, as well as the Reindeer River and Wollaston Lake system to the eastern shore of Lake Athabasca. For one reason or another all of them proved impracticable as commercial fur-trade routes.

From the early days of the fur trade there were five principal routes or variations of them used by the Indian 'middlemen' and traders to bring their pelts to the posts of Churchill and York Factory. These were: the 'Upper' or north track via Grass River to Split Lake on the Nelson; the 'Middle' track by the Minago River to Cross Lake and the Bigstone River to the Hayes — with a branch from Cross Lake to Oxford Lake on the Hayes; the Hayes River route across Lake Winnipeg to Cumberland Lake on the Saskatchewan; the Burntwood River to Split Lake on the Nelson; and the Churchill River route. The Grass, Minago, and Hayes routes were centred principally on Cumberland House, while the Burntwood and Churchill River routes were more closely related to Fort Churchill.

The Churchill River route was long, arduous and too far north for satisfactory seasonable open water; with the decline of Fort Churchill it finally ceased to function as a regular route. The establishment of Cumberland House in 1774, resulted in the 'Upper' and 'Middle' tracks being practically superseded by the Hayes River — Lake Winnipeg — Saskatchewan River route. This route made a great swing south and to avoid this, the Hudson's Bay Company sought a shorter route for its Athabasca transport. The Burntwood River route would eliminate this southward swing providing a more direct course west from Split Lake to the Churchill River, thus cutting off an estimated two hundred miles on the trip to Athabasca.



*Governor George Simpson
on a tour of inspection.*

*From a painting by Cyrus Cuneo,
copied by L. L. FitzGerald
for the Hudson's Bay Company.*



Horsetail and sedge surround an upland pond in northern Manitoba at 56° 35' N/98° 51' W, close to the area of Simpson's detour.

The Burntwood Route consequently emerged as the most promising possibility but as it turned out, its exploration was the final attempt in the quest for a shorter transport distance. The key point on the route, in passing from the drainage of the Nelson River into that of the Churchill River, was the Burntwood Carrying Place or Burntwood Portage. It was referred to on numerous occasions and its general location was indicated on some early maps, but its specific location was left in doubt.

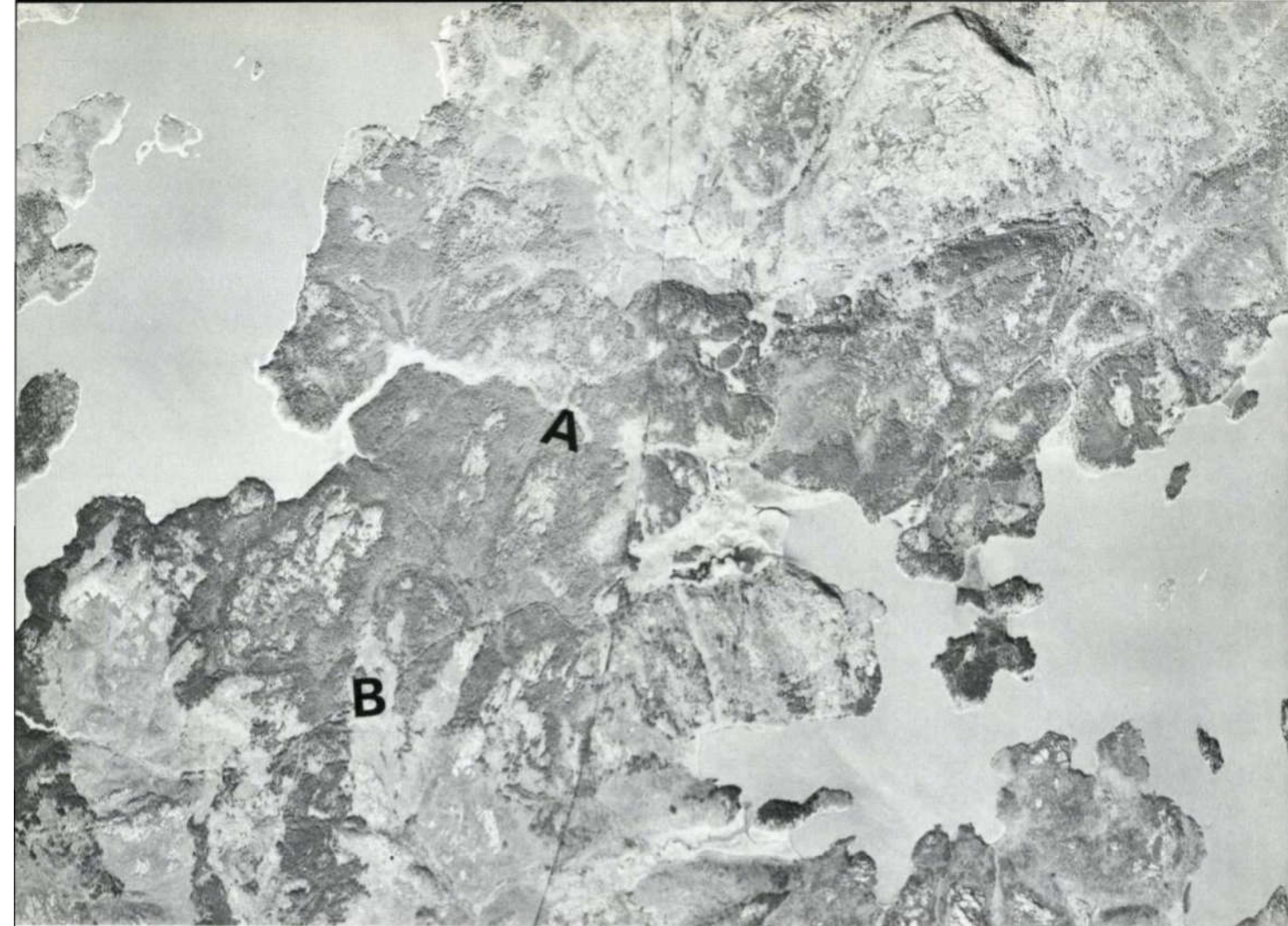
One of the earliest references to this portage was made in 1792 when Philip Turnor explored the Nelson River to the mouth of the Burntwood on Split Lake. There he learned from an Indian account that the Burntwood River was navigable up to a 'portage' which led into the Churchill River. In 1793 George Charles went inland from Fort Churchill to Burntwood Lake but the portage he used is not mentioned. In 1795 Malchom Ross and David Thompson set out from York Factory with four canoes. They journeyed up the Nelson to Split Lake, up the Burntwood, and over the Burntwood Carrying Place into the Churchill River.

A. Arrowsmith's map of 1795 indicates the Burntwood Carrying Place between the north end of Burntwood Lake and an unnamed lake immediately north but

the map does not agree with present topography in this area. In 1806 Cha-Chay-Pay-Way-Tis, an Indian, made a very rough map (the original is in the Hudson's Bay Archives, London, England) which shows Burntwood Portage between Weepoose Kane Lake (Burntwood Lake) and another unnamed lake. Apparently these are the first instances of the carrying place being named as such. It appears that the Indians knew and no doubt used the portage many years before the fur traders were interested in the route.

The Burntwood route in the early years was used by canoes and first plied by boats in 1816, when Nelson House sent its returns by this means to York Factory. Nicholas Garry is on record as stating that navigationally it was by no means difficult either with boats or canoes. In 1822 Simpson had the route examined by an experienced Indian guide who said that it was satisfactory. Simpson then reported it favourably to the Committee in London and its use was approved. The Athabasca brigade was directed to bring their returns over the Burntwood in 1822-23, and a supply of pemmican was ordered from the Saskatchewan posts for Split Lake to provision the route.

In 1824 Simpson tried the route himself on his trip to the Columbia River District. He started from York



An aerial photograph of Burntwood Portage between Flatrock Lake (left) and Burntwood Lake (right). The probable route is marked (A) but a second and longer path (B) is visible and may also have been used. The scale of the map is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the inch.

G. EMERLY

Factory and went up the Nelson to Split Lake and continued up the Burntwood. After he left Split Lake his guide confessed that he did not know the way to Frog Portage and that it would be necessary to go to Nelson House to find another guide; the course was intricate and impossible to follow without one. It was about a day's journey to Nelson House and Simpson turned off the regular route to go there. It is not known definitely where the detour occurred but from the topography of the area, as well as Simpson's rate of travel, there is little doubt that it was at the sharp bend to the southwest on the Burntwood River at approximately $99^{\circ}55'$ west longitude and $55^{\circ}35'$ north latitude.

After he 'struck off the regular track' Simpson described the detour in his journal as one of the worst portages he had ever encountered. It was a continuous swamp about three miles long leading to a shallow creek with many zigzag windings not as long as the canoe. It was overgrown with high grass and willows through which, accompanied by harassing hordes of mosquitoes,

they cut their way. They spent the night on this forbidding course, named 'Chemin de Diable' by Simpson's men and the next day arrived at Nelson House on White Fish Lake. There was no one at the post who could guide them but by sheerly fortuitous circumstances, Simpson, at three o'clock in the morning, found an Indian who put them on the way to Frog Portage.

By travelling a difficult course about seven miles long he had crossed from the Burntwood system to the waters of the Churchill.

The regular route to the Burntwood Carrying Place ran up the Burntwood River and along Burntwood Lake to its northwest arm, where it connected to the southeast end of Flatrock Lake on the Churchill River. The portage, conforming to the topographic contour, can be followed readily on aerial photographs. It is about one mile long.

Several factors contributed to make research on the carrying place confusing and difficult. One was a reference in the record to the portage as being from Burnt-

wood Lake to Kissinging River. The Kissinging River flows from the southwest into Flatrock Lake about five miles from its south end; the carrying place connects Burntwood Lake with the south end of Flatrock Lake. Consequently it would not be to the Kissinging River.

Another confusing situation was created by the existence of two Nelson Houses about 60 miles apart — at Footprint and Nelson Lakes. Simpson's reference to visiting Nelson House on White Fish Lake added further confusion. The clarification of these ambiguities was necessary to determine the route taken by Simpson.

Present-day maps show Nelson House on Footprint Lake which is connected to, and just north of Three-point Lake on the Burntwood River. Naturally it would be assumed, and has been so stated, that it was the post Simpson visited to find a guide in 1824. This is not supported by the realities of the situation. Nelson House on Footprint Lake was not established until 1833. The only operation in the Footprint Lake area close to the time of Simpson's 1824 visit was a post on Threepoint Lake occupied by John Scott for the Hudson's Bay Company. This post was in operation in 1823, but not in subsequent years. Threepoint Lake is on the Burntwood River, and no portage such as Simpson experienced on his detour would be necessary. Consequently both Nelson House on Footprint Lake and John Scott's post on Threepoint Lake can be eliminated.

Early maps show Nelson House on Nelson Lake where the Churchill River makes a sharp bend to the north. This post was established by September 1800 at the 'Grand Fishing Place' and was moved in 1809. This post was subordinate to Fort Churchill, and after 1821 it became headquarters of the Nelson River District. During this period Fort Churchill declined and Nelson House was abandoned in 1827. The year of Simpson's trip, 1824, is consistent with its span of operation and the records state that he visited Nelson House, Nelson Lake, Churchill River.

Simpson himself states that he visited Nelson House on White Fish Lake but White Fish Lake is difficult to identify. There is no documentation on it in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Beaver House, London. One writer states it was probably the southeastern portion of what is now Nelson Lake. One map which shows White Fish Lake is published in *Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870* by E. E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Record Society, Volume 22. This map, compiled from a collection of maps, shows White Fish Lake at the sharp northerly bend of the Churchill, with Nelson Lake (and Fort) contiguous to the east.

The cartography of the area at the bend has undergone marked changes since the earliest maps. Only one lake is shown at the bend on A. Arrowsmith's map of 1795, as well as on J. Arrowsmith's map of 1834. It is unnamed on the former but named Nelson on the latter. Several other early maps show Nelson Lake at the bend. Two lakes are shown on the 'Volume 22' map at the bend

— White Fish and Nelson contiguous to the east. Present-day maps also show two lakes, Highrock and Nelson contiguous to the east. It would appear the lake at the bend was known at various times as White Fish, Nelson and Highrock.

The name Highrock apparently did not come into use until later years. Simpson states that he called at Nelson House on White Fish Lake whereas the record indicates that Nelson House was on Nelson Lake, Churchill River. Because of the lakes being connected it would be difficult to know where the border between them was located and a site on one could easily be mistaken as being on the other. In addition to confusing one lake with the other there is a possibility that White Fish Lake was an arm in this area of Nelson Lake.

In 1809 Nelson House was moved to an island about three miles west of its original site. The site was in the vicinity of the settlement of Highrock shown on today's maps. This location for Nelson House would be logical; it would be on the main transport route of the Churchill River, rather than on the southeastern portion of Nelson Lake about 25 miles to the southeast.

Simpson's detour from the Burntwood River would appear to be the logical route across Nelson Lake. It seems highly improbable that he portaged from the northeast arm of Burntwood Lake to the south end of Highrock Lake. It is unrealistic to think that the seven-mile portage 'Chemin de Diable', was the easily accessible carrying place about a mile long. Therefore it is evident Simpson did not cross the Burntwood Carrying Place on his trip in 1824. In view of his advocacy of the Burntwood Route it is ironic that he should be denied the experience of crossing it, because of an incompetent guide.

Governor Simpson's interest in the route cooled after his 1824 trip and in 1825 he decided it was impracticable as a fur-trade route. In 1828 when he started for Peace River from York Factory, he chose the regular communication via Hayes River — Cumberland Lake — Churchill River. Shortly after this, the Burntwood River route was commercially abandoned.

Several reasons were advanced for its rejection. Hazards were involved in rounding Point au Marsh on Hudson Bay in going from York Factory to the Nelson River. The route was too far removed from the prairies, the source of pemmican supply, and its season of open water was shorter than the southern route. Then too, the heavy volume of water on the Nelson River was a deterrent. Finally, the boat crews did not wish to forego the sensual pleasures offered by Norway and Cumberland Houses.

The amalgamation of the two rival fur-trade companies took place in 1821. Since the Hudson's Bay Company had failed to find a shorter practical route to Athabasca, the old route laid down by the North West Company was maintained. ♦

CROWFOOT, CHIEF OF THE BLACKFEET

By Hugh A. Dempsey. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1972. 226 pp. illus. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Grant MacEwan

The question was asked many times: when is somebody going to write the Crowfoot biography? For students of the western scene, the name of the Great Chief has long held a peculiar fascination. The Crowfoot story had to be written and Hugh Dempsey was clearly the person to do it.

This objective study culminating in *Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet*, confirms much that has been common knowledge about the man; much, also, that will be new to readers. Other writers could comb the libraries and archives and come up with useful sketches but Dempsey was able to draw upon unrecorded sources of information heretofore locked in the memories of the older members of the tribes. Being on the best of terms with the Blackfoot people and with some knowledge of their language, he alone could have chronicled as much information bearing on the Crowfoot role in the life of his tribesmen and in the destiny of Canada.

It will come as a surprise to many readers that the great Blackfoot Chief was born a Blood. The two tribes, along with the Piegiens, were part of the Blackfoot Confederacy and for a Blood to become a Blackfoot was not such a stupendous matter but it was noteworthy. The boy's Blood father was killed in battle and the circumstances of his mother's remarriage to a Blackfoot brave resulted in Crowfoot's emergence as a Blackfoot.

The private life of this man who became recognized as The Chief of Chiefs is not without interest. During his life, according to the author, Crowfoot had 10 wives, 'although there were seldom more than three or four in his household at a time.' One of these was a sister of the famous Blood Chief, Red Crow. Surviving children, however, were not numerous because most of the Chief's offspring met early deaths

from tuberculosis. Nevertheless, the demands of accommodation for wives, children, and other relations forced him to be a two-tipi traveller. He was rich in horses, having as many as 400, including some particularly good buffalo runners.

In temperament, Crowfoot was quiet and retiring but when aroused by provocation he was capable of violent temper tantrums. His leadership, however, was unquestioned. He had strong views about religion and was on good terms with missionaries on the reservation but refused to adopt the white man's religion. His people might make their own decisions but for his own part, his native religion met all his needs.

The book amplifies much of the moderately well-known events in Crowfoot's life: the first meeting with Colonel James Macleod and the Mounted Police in 1874, the adoption of Poundmaker as a foster son, and the signing of Blackfoot Treaty No. 7. As for the adoption, Crowfoot had several sons but just one with all the attributes for a great warrior and he was killed by the Crees on his first warpath. The father grieved and felt compelled to seek a Cree scalp in revenge. When the score was evened, a temporary peace followed and it was at this time that Crowfoot's attention was drawn to a handsome young Cree who resembled the dead son. Crowfoot sought to meet the young man and when there was opportunity, he explained his sorrow and invited the young man, Poundmaker, to be adopted into the Crowfoot household. The young man accepted and learned the Blackfoot language and was frequently in Crowfoot's lodge.

As a young man, Crowfoot distinguished himself as a warrior. Later he was no less famous as an orator but as the author portrays the Chief, his most outstanding characteristics were in statesmanship. This will help to explain some of the most common questions about him.

Views about 'good Indians' have always varied. A belligerent native leader who would take to the war-path rather than surrender to the advancing whites was almost sure to be seen by his own people as a 'good

Indian', by the whites as a 'bad Indian'. The submissive leader could expect the white man's approval and favours. There were those who would 'sell out' to the new-comer race in return for supplies of tobacco and booze and some of them went into the records as 'good Indians'. It was enough to make the observer wonder if it were possible for an Indian Chief to command simultaneously the confidence of two races whose ways and purposes were so much in conflict.

Author Dempsey leaves no doubt concerning Crowfoot's courage and relates various war-path adventures when his bravery was tested; he came through as a leader in whom the Blackfoot people would find pride. There was no reason to believe that he was ever soft towards the whites or that he surrendered too easily or too readily. His greatest strength was in his wisdom and good judgement, in knowing when to be adamant and when to invite compromise. He knew what he would like to achieve; he probably shared exactly the same hope as Big Bear and Sitting Bull — that of seeing the native people employing their united strength to recover the buffalo country for themselves and their children. But why rebel if the people are likely to be worse off rather than better?

Crowfoot had plenty of opportunities to join in rebellion and these would be difficult to reject. There were Sioux proposals for united action both before and after the Battle of Little Big Horn and with them the hint that if the Blackfoot people were not among the Indian attackers, they could expect to be attacked. Then there was the North West Rebellion of '85 in which Crowfoot might have become involved. Difficult as his position must have been, Crowfoot had two very good reasons for refusing to join the rebel forces: first, his promise to the police that he would remain at peace and, second, a conviction that the native people might win some battles but could not win a long war and would suffer more than ever as a consequence. If he could not regain the former Indian domination and freedom, he would work for the best possible compromise and do all in his power to guard Indian honour.

But, as the author reveals clearly, a man with Crowfoot's high ideals deserved better than he received. The post-treaty years were extremely difficult and the concluding chapters in the book are sad and disturbing. The buffalo herds were disappearing; Crowfoot's Indians were starving; the Blackfoot relationship with the Mounted Police and the authorities deteriorated and the Chief sensed betrayal. In addition to all else, there were personal worries and sorrows, children dying, the death of Poundmaker and finally, the Chief's own failing health. It was not a happy ending but the events showed Crowfoot as a man of stature and judgement and benevolence to the last. The book is good reading; it is one that Canadians should read.

Grant MacEwan, Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, is the distinguished author of several books on the West, his most recent being 'Sitting Bull'.

THE LAST WAR DRUM, THE NORTH WEST CAMPAIGN OF 1885

By Desmond Morton. Canadian War Museum Historical Publication 5. Hakkert, Toronto, 1972, 193 pp., illus. \$9.00.

Reviewed by H. Bowsfield

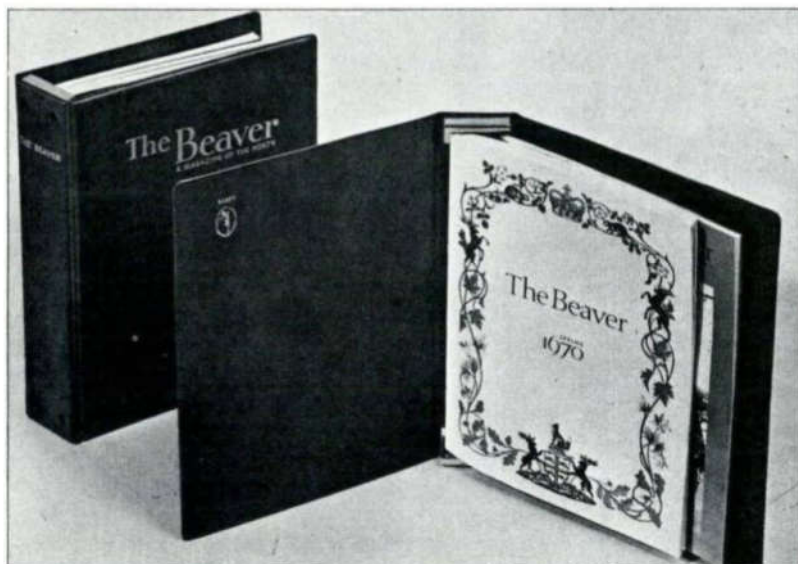
On the last day of March, 1885 as a Canadian military force on C.P.R. flat cars was passing through the inhospitable terrain north of Lake Superior to the scene of the North West Rebellion, Sir Adolphe Caron, Minister of Militia, telegraphed to the officers commanding the force: 'wish

you to travel night and day. I want to show what Canadian militia can do.' Two weeks later, Colonel Arthur Williams wrote the Minister: 'You ought to feel proud of the manner in which all the troops performed the march by Lake Superior. It would do credit to the best organized regular force in the world & is worthy of note historically.'

This exchange of communications might serve well as both the theme and purpose of Desmond Morton's account of the military campaign against Louis Riel in 1885. While there was neither brilliant strategy nor glorious battles and though the campaign was called a small engagement, a trivial affair, it was, in Morton's words, an impressive first showing by a Canadian military force. Morton's purpose is to familiarize readers with an aspect of the 1885 events seldom covered by other historians and to assert a place for the campaign within Canada's military tradition. Riel's challenge to the federal government in 1885 was, it is claimed, Canada's first great crisis. How the volunteer militia was organized, equipped, and serviced, how it was transported and how it fought in this crisis constitutes the core of Morton's story. The volume is a by-product of Morton's work with R. H. Roy in preparing the Champlain Society's *Telegrams of the North West Campaign 1885*, published in 1972. It makes far more use than historians have previously made of the Caron Papers in the Public Archives of Canada and is profusely illustrated.

Though Morton is trained to undertake a military analysis his work is not confined to military engagements or battle tactics. There is, however, sufficient reference to Métis forces in brush-covered coulees firing at exposed militiamen on a hill above to set the military scene in understandable simplicity. His history covers the broader aspects of the military story — administration, communication, medical services, and transportation. Morton covers in addition political favouritism, patronage, charges of mismanagement and waste, profiteering, and rampant commercialism in Winnipeg. The title of the book implies a dimension beyond the military; the story of the failure of the Indian and Métis people to contend with the advancing alien culture of the white man is included. Not forgotten either is the enigmatic figure of Riel or the racial and political turmoil which the events of 1885 aroused. *The Last War Drum* is about the home front as well as the front lines.

Morton, who teaches history at the University of Toronto's Erindale College, comes from a military family and has had military training himself. His grandfather, General Sir William Otter, took part in the 1885 campaign and Morton served for ten years in the Canadian army, retiring as a captain in 1964. As a military historian he reinforces an analysis made some years ago by Professor G. F. Stanley about Indian society: 'Both Indians and métis fought essentially as individuals, following orders only by inclination. The in-



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tense internal democracy of the Indian tribe was a weak basis for planning military strategy.' Compounding this weakness was Riel's hopelessly irresolute leadership impeding the shrewd and experienced lieutenant, Gabriel Dumont. This assessment, though valid, over-emphasizes the role of the Indians in the outcome of the campaign. In the end Batoche was the one decisive engagement and the assessment seems irrelevant when weighed against the relative strength of the two sides in the struggle. Riel had been able to mobilize only a small part of the Indian and Métis people and despite their early victories the campaign was, in the long run, as Morton reminds us — 'no contest'. The Riel charisma was ineffective even against an untried, inexperienced Canadian force.

Morton's work is carefully and fully researched. He approaches his subject calmly, judiciously and with a clarity that helps the reader comprehend a specialist's approach to the events of 1885.

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THE TIME OF THE BUFFALO

By Tom McHugh. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972. 339 pp., illus. \$10.00

Reviewed by R. W. Sutton

Sometimes, looking back at the vast assemblage of books and articles concerning the buffalo, a man is inclined to wonder if, one day, the buffalo may not be outnumbered by those who write about them. Some of the works have been excellent, others incredibly bad. Happily, Dr McHugh's book must be numbered among the best. In fact it is doubtful if, in any single volume of this size, the story has ever been told so well.

The first chapter, 'The Buffalo Culture' opens at Cache, Oklahoma on that day in 1907 when fifteen buffalo arrived by train to establish the United States's first buffalo refuge. Fifteen buffalo! Yet in the years gone before whole tribes had sustained themselves, great tribal migrations had taken place and, for these people of the Plains, the buffalo in their millions determined almost every aspect of life and culture. And then in 1907, at Cache,

Oklahoma, there was great excitement. Fifteen buffalo had come back — by train.

McHugh takes a very common-sense approach to the business of estimating the former numbers of the buffalo. Equating the forage requirements of buffalo with those of domestic cattle, based on the acreage required to support an animal, he applies the estimates of modern ranchers to the Grasslands as they used to be. Even after applying the control figures set up by varying range capacity and competing herbivores, he still comes up with an estimate of 30 million buffalo on the old range. But, as he points out, to the early traveller the buffalo were in numbers — numberless.

As most writers feel compelled to do on this subject, Dr McHugh touches upon the buffalo's prehistoric ancestry, migration from Asia, and known use by early man over 8,000 years ago. He follows this up with the historical chronicles of the first Europeans on the scene.

The greater portion of the ensuing text deals with the Indians and the buffalo. His exceptionally detailed notes on preparations for the hunt, hunting methods, utilization, symbolism and ceremony emphasize the tremendous importance of the buffalo to the Indians of the Plains.

An outline of the animal's natural history, from birth to death, makes clear that man was not the sole limiting factor of buffalo numbers. Other predators, as well as floods, fire, storms and disease played a part. But in the final analysis men accomplished, even as General Sheridan had urged, the destruction of the Indians' commissary. In January 1899 the great naturalist Hornaday was obliged to say, in his census, that of free-roaming buffalo in the United States, only 85 remained.

This book ends on a note of hope. Having outlined the efforts since the early 1900s to bring back the buffalo, the author gives us the figures for 1970. Much condensed, these tell us that there are in Canada well over 15,000 animals, and over 14,000 in the United States. Noting this as a dramatic and encouraging rescue, he concludes 'If man cannot make a passionate commitment to his fellow creatures, many more will vanish in time, and our world, ironically enough, will become a cold, inhuman place in which to live.'

R. W. Sutton is Chief of Interpretation, Prairie Region, Parks Canada.

OUT OF THE SILENCE

Photographs by Adelaide de Menil, text by William Reid. New Press, Toronto, 1972. 126 pages. \$10.00

Reviewed by Malvina Bolus

This is a mood piece done in exquisite taste. A book to be picked up when stress and racket become unendurable and quiet beauty can sooth the weary spirit. Its sombre black cover suggests the silence of the grave — alas all too true. The subject is poles: totem poles, house posts, memorial poles, carved by Haida, Kwakiutl, Tsimshian, and Tlingit artists. Here is the sensitive depiction of some of the relics as they are today in their setting of forest or river-side or sea-shore — lonely, decayed, but still powerful. Adelaide de Menil has a keen eye for composition; she catches the loveliness of the scene and epitomizes the pole by a detail of carving.

William Reid, descendant of the Haida, silversmith, broadcaster, carver of wood, in his short text suggests the meaning behind the weathered work that is visible today and sketches the life of the people who created these symbols from the great red cedar trees of the Pacific Coast. The territory of the Indians of the northwest coast ranged from Puget Sound to the Alaska Panhandle, some 1,300 miles occupied by people separated not only by sea and forest but by seven different language groups. The illustrations in this book range from Sukkwan in Alaska to Turnour Island in Johnstone Strait, according to Reid a thousand miles of coast (not counting inlets, bays and islands) and five language groups. He mentions the memorial pole as commemorating some great event though it would seem that more often such a pole was a tribute to an individual.

The text ends with the silent return of the poles to the forests of their birth. Ms de Menil's photographs add a postscript showing the final indignity suffered by the totem pole today — used as an eye-catcher near a storage shed, or secondary to a road sign and power way-station. Silence would be better!

A map and notes at the end indicate the locations of the poles and the tribes concerned. The book was published for the Amon Carter Museum of Fort Worth, Texas. It is warmly recommended to the devotee of the beauties of the Northwest Coast.



*"Henry Kelsey came down with a good fleet of Indians;
and hath travelled and endeavoured to keep the Peace
among them according to my Order."*

Governor George Geyer, York Fort, wrote this in 1692 of Company explorer Henry Kelsey, renowned for his expeditions to the prairie country. He was the first man of his time in Western Canada to master the difficult but essential technique of living and travelling like an Indian, to work seriously on the native languages and, most important of all, to act as a peacemaker between the various tribes.

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